Autumn 1983

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CONTENTS

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This issue of *Personal Software* is something of a departure from the recent format of a machine or series of machines per issue. You see, it came to our attention that the micro games enthusiast, far from being a dwarf who plays a lot of tennis, is a fun-loving home computer user who is faced with a vast array of commercial games software that varies amazingly in quality, value and 'playability'. So in an attempt to guide the more discerning gamesters around the current games offerings we have put together over 200 reviews of commercial games available.

A wide variety of game type has been looked at, including home computer versions of standard arcade games, educational games for the younger user, family type packages, games with and without graphics and sound, and adventure games as well as the more common 'push the button and annihilate everything (or nothing if your aim is as good as mine!) that crosses your path' type of game. The reviews make up most of the magazine and are arranged alphabetically by the title of the game, so you can easily locate the game you are interested in and read our reviewer's opinion of it.

If you have no particular game in mind but would like to know something about games for your specific machine then you can go to the back of the magazine and consult our index to the games reviewed herein; these are arranged primarily by the micro and you are then given the name of the game, the size of machine required, the price, supplier and our star rating.

Alongside each review is a ratings table which is fairly self-explanatory and gives a percentage value for Graphics, Ease of use, Instructions, Play it again and Value for money. A star rating is also awarded which has been derived from the reviews of the game done by our various computer magazines.

All of the reviews are drawn from ASP's cluster of computer magazines: *Home Computing Weekly, Personal Computing Today, ZX Computing* and *A & B Computing.* It must be emphasised that the review given is the personal opinion of the reviewer and you should, in the final analysis, be guided by your own particular game tastes. Never forget that one man's addiction is another man's cure for insomnia!

Finally, details of the supplier and price of the games are given with each review and as far as we know this information was correct at the time of printing. If you are in any doubt about any of the games however, please contact the supplier given, and do not write to *Personal Software.* We have by no means tried to be comprehensive in this brief look at the commercial games market — indeed we're not even sure that that is possible. There are a large number of games and companies that are not represented in these pages. This is not intended as any sort of comment on either the games or the companies but is merely a reflection on the lack of space available for such a rapidly growing area in home entertainment.

Credits: Our grateful thanks to the following individuals and organisations for their assistance in the production of this issue: Walt Disney Productions, New Realm Distributors, The Ladd Company, Scotia-Barber, MGM, Rex Features Ltd, P.A. Reuter, Universal City Studios, William, Enzo, Jeff, Gary, Roy, Wes Tom, Walter, Lesley, Kathy and Adrian.

A

ABACUS GAMES PACK 2

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£4.95
Abacus,
186 St. Helens Avenue,
Swansea,
West Glamorgan.

There are four games on this cassette: Nine Lives, Bulls Tables, Candyman and Target. It is a mixed bag in more than one sense.

Nine Lives is a cat and mouse game, in which you must catch as many of the stationary mice as you can whilst evading the dog (who will eat you) but save the mice by carrying them to safety. Though the principle is simple, it is original and fun to play. The graphics are not quite crowd-stopping but are good; this is quite a good games pack type game.

The second program is called Bulls Tables in which you must answer 10 sums of selectable type (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division), and difficulty, otherwise the bull will escape from his field and eat you. The graphics are very good with a little man running around the screen picking up and depositing numbers. The idea of having an angry bull trying to get out is, educationally, very good, as it keeps people (yes, people not just kids) interested. Unfortunately, this is a typical example of it being more fun, graphically, to lose than win, as the bull runs around the screen and eats your numbers. Apart from this last point it is a good game.

Candyman is a game for two players playing separately, in which each player must run from the lower platform to the top without being hit by a piece of psychedelic scaffolding; if successful then you have to get your next man up. Again this game is original and often quite difficult (it is probably the best on the tape) though the graphics are a little disappointing. It is definitely fun and more addictive than many 'games pack' games.

Finally, there is Target, which deserves last place, as it is very predictably a game of shooting the ducks, etc, as they go across the top of the screen. The graphics are quite good but the rifle is so far away that absolutely no skill is possible.

Overall, this games pack is good but not the best. It is fun but it is not all particularly well-written. Bulls Tables is the odd one out in as much as it should be on an educational pack. However, quite a fun set of programs.

J.W.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	65%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

ACQUIRE

TRS-80 I & III; Apple II; PET
£12.95
Avalon Hill,
650 High Street,
North Finchley,
London N12.

Acquire is a strategy game for 1 to 6 players, where the object is to start hotel chains and expand them by building further hotels around them. At the same time, each player may buy shares in any hotel chain, even those started by other players. The player with the most shares in the chain controls that chain, and may attempt to make a profit by merging his chain with others.

To try and describe this game is more difficult than playing it, as, with the computer doing all the calculations, and updating the displayed playing board, all that is left is for the player to plan his strategy. It is hard to define the type of audience that this game will appeal to, certainly not those who only play the 'arcade' games.

The game, which does not make use of any graphic features, is written in machine language and is, therefore, fast in its reaction time.

D.B.

Graphics	0%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	76%
Value for Money	83%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

ADVENTURE 1

ZX Spectrum, ZX81 (16K)
£9.95 (£8.95 for ZX81)
Abersoft,
7 Maes Afallen,
Bow Street,
Dyfed SY24 5BA.

This is an adventure game, and for the uninitiated an adventure game is one of a 'search' usually for treasure of some description hidden in caves, passages, jungles, Egyptian pyramids and the like. Just to make matters more complicated, there are usually a number of monsters and mysterious objects whose sole aim in life is to hinder or help you on your quest.

Abersoft's adventure, however, has no harmful monsters but makes you rely on your own intelligence to get around the passages and utilise the objects you find to help you win the treasure. In the first scene, you are looking at a water house and you can see a large set of keys, a shiny brass lamp, some tasty food and a bottle of water. You can instruct the computer by giving it simple one or two word instructions such as 'get keys' or 'take lamp'. Using these keywords, you can pick up a number of items that you might think will be of use to you at a later point in the game; you are allowed to 'hold' up to eight items.

To find out what you are holding at any stage in the game, you type 'inventory'; the computer's recognition of vocabulary is very good, and fast too due to the fact that the vast majority of the program is written in machine code. The computer only scans the first four letters of each keyword so 'inve' is the same as 'inventory'.

To move about in the game, simple compass directions should be given such as 'N', 'E', 'S' and 'W'. Instructions such as 'enter' are obeyed such that if you are next to a building or the entrance to a passage, you will appear inside.

A 'SMASHING' GAME

The adventure is based on a series of caves, canyon crawls and passages. There are countless rooms with a white mist lingering on the floor (similar to a Top of the Pops rehearsal, maybe?). Most passages, rooms, etc, are empty but some will contain useful objects and treasure. The treasure varies from extremely heavy golden nuggets to easily breakable Ming vases.

The Ming vase had me in some confusion for a few days (don't get the idea that you'll manage to finish this game in a week!). The problem with the vase is that the only way to put something down is to use the command 'drop' which is countered with the reply 'you hurled it delicately to the ground'. (You have to put some of the objects down again as for every item of treasure you return to the water house, you receive 10 points.) So all I got the first few times I tried this was a smashed vase! Until I found the pillow, of course . . .

There are 21 items of treasure to find in the game in all, so don't expect an easy time. The adventure holds many secrets for the player to work out, one of which is the meaning of the secret messages on the walls in certain rooms. I managed to work out most of them, but I won't spoil your fun by telling you.

LACK OF TALENT?

At one point in the game I came across a very strange room in which I was standing at a window looking down on a pit (complete with mist). Opposite me I could see a man at another window waving back at me. It has been a puzzle to me ever since — what is the relevance of the eerie figure? Perhaps he was, like me, another player driven to madness by this game.

I fear he might have been, as the game is non-graphical and requires great enthusiasm to play for more than a few hours at a stretch. Pure text, with no colour or sound, is a clear waste of the ZX Spectrum's talent and would clearly wear the interest of the player.

Far too often in the game, I found myself going round and round in circles. However, there's no resting to cook the odd meal or read a book or two while you await some happening — the computer always has a quick answer for you. For instance, in the depth of frustration, I told the computer 'where to go' to which it promptly told me 'Watch it. The wizard is watching you'. I found its understanding of my use of 'non-Queen's English' quite amusing and prompts me to applaud the author's sense of humour.

One of my main criticisms of the game is the actual quality of the cassettes themselves. One of the two copies I had for review had a header that was full of rubbish, so that the normally tolerant ZX Spectrum rejected it. The whole program was littered with clicks and buzzes. However, I did manage to load the second copy, albeit with some difficulty.

P.H.

Graphics	0%
Ease of Use	78%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	89%
Value for Money	90%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

AIRSTRIKE

Atari (16K)
£15.95
Gemini Electronics,
50 Newton Street,
Manchester M1.

Airstrike is a version of the popular arcade game Scramble, whose format is very similar to the original arcade version, with a fighter craft flying horizontally across the screen through a series of caverns and mazes.

It is divided into three sections. The first section is made up of mountainous terrain which is defended heavily by surface to air missiles. Your mission is to fly through this section destroying these missiles while capturing fuel and ammunition dumps which are needed to replenish your ever dwindling supplies.

The second section is populated by fission bombs which are released by satellites and fall like rain across a central cavern through which you must pass. When you have completed these sections successfully you must then enter the labyrinth. To do this you must pass through a series of airlocks which can only be opened if you destroy their activating mechanism.

Once you have entered the first section of the labyrinth you then encounter enemy fighters which guard the airlocks. If you manage to complete this section you then start back at the beginning on a new level where the action is much meaner.

Airstrike is very difficult to play and unless you are a seasoned gamester takes a long time to master the controls.

Despite this the program is well written and uses the Atari computer facilities to the full. I think that this program could easily achieve the cult status of the Atari Pac Man or Star Raiders.

Graphics in this program are up to the Atari computer's usually high standard making it a delight to watch both for graphical representation and use of colour.

C.P.

Graphics	81%
Ease of Use	66%
Instructions	71%
Play it Again	82%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	

THE ALIEN

VIC-20 (+3K)
£9.95
Audiogenic,
PO Box 88,
Reading,
Berkshire.

It is always a dangerous move giving a piece of software a grandiose title, but luckily The Alien, from Audiogenic, doesn't come off too badly. It is based, as with a lot of other programs, on a maze, except that in this variation your task is not to escape, but to survive. The program is written in machine code and requires an extra 3K of memory over and above the standard machine.

Photograph courtesy of New Realm Distributors.

When the game starts you are placed in control of a man stranded in the middle of the maze. For company he has five or six aliens who behave in a very unfriendly manner and try to eat him. You move about the maze avoiding the aliens, by using either the keyboard or a joystick. When you are safe from immediate danger you can set about inflicting your revenge on the aliens by digging pits for them to blunder into. Once you have snared an unsuspecting alien you must then rush to the side of the pit and fill it in, but be warned, if you do not reach the pit in time, then the alien will escape, usually straight towards you.

This is not your only problem, because if one of his companions comes by he will rescue him and both will set off with a justifiable blood-lust in their eyes.

As the game progresses and you manage to clear all of the aliens you are placed in another maze with even more homicidal extraterrestrials. The game finally ends when you have lost your three lives.

This is a well written game that is a lot of fun to play but the thing which makes it an above average buy is the inclusion of a few humorous extras, such as the sight of a very rotund, grinning alien with your feet sticking out of its mouth and the transformation of yourself into an angel which wafts serenely to the top of the screen on your demise. Once again good use of the VIC-20's definable characters and its colour and sound should make this a welcome addition to anyone's collection.

C.P.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	65%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

ALIEN BLITZ

VIC-20 (3K, 5K)
£7.95
Audiogenic,
PO Box 88,
Reading,
Berkshire.

In spite of the unfamiliar name, this game turned out to be a rather unexceptional version of the old favourite — Space Invaders.

Standard-shaped aliens were well-drawn and nicely animated, but I was surprised at the lack of colour: all objects on the screen are white.

The aliens move smoothly, accompanied by the mandatory 'heart-beat' sound. Unfortunately all other sound effects are very poor, and started to get on my nerves very quickly.

The movable laser bases can either be controlled by joystick or by the two Shift keys and Space bar. But I found the latter method awkward to use.

Level of play can be varied for 0 (easy) to 9 (you must be joking), but seems to be no more than a simple control of the alien's speed. Level selection is followed by a demonstration game. Surprisingly, no high score option is available.

A.W

Graphics	58%
Ease of Use	65%
Instructions	68%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	55%
Star Quality ★ ★	

ALIEN DEFENSE

TRS-80 I & III
£11.50
Microdeal,
41 Truro Road
St Austell
Cornwall PL25 5JE

This is an arcade style game with fast action, reasonable graphics and good sound effects.

Alien Defense is a shoot the aliens game played in the horizontal mode rather than the vertical mode. You control a space ship that travels horizontally across a moving landscape. Above this landscape are scattered a liberal helping of aliens, and hidden in the mountains of the landscape are a number of your men (15 to start with).

Occasionally an alien lander will carry off one of your men, and if you destroy the lander while it is accomplishing this, and you catch your falling man you score 500 points. Different point values are scored for the differing alien craft that you destroy, but for every 25 aliens destroyed you obtain a further bonus of 100 points for each of your men that you have left. As well as firing at the aliens you start with three Smart Bombs. These bombs will destroy everything on the screen except your ship, and this includes your men. There is also a Warp Drive facility that you can activate to get you out of tight positions. While you are firing upon the aliens, they, of course, are firing at you. The missiles that they fire can only be destroyed by one of your Smart Bombs, though their bombs can be destroyed by your fire.

Overall I enjoyed the game and its complexity, but I did find the control keys difficult to manage. The number keys 1, 2 and 3 control your ship by changing its direction, moving it up and down respectively. The number keys 8 and 9 move it forward and fire your gun. The Space bar drops a Smart Bomb and the Enter key activates Warp Drive. All this I found quite a lot to handle, though all except the Enter key felt comfortable under the hand.

Up to two people can play the game and there is a top 10 score board in true arcade style. Well worth buying this one.

D.B.

Graphics	61%
Ease of Use	62%
Instructions	51%
Play it Again	71%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

ARCADE ACTION

Dragon 32
£3.95
Apex Trading,
115 Crescent Drive South,
Brighton BN2 6SB.

The Arcade Action tape contains two games for the Dragon 32, Meteor Run and Breakout. The first game I expected to be an attempt at Asteroids or something similar, I was, however, sadly disappointed. Not only did the game bear no resemblance to Asteroids, but it had little resemblance to a game at all.

The idea of the game is to pilot your spacecraft past hoards of 'meteors' which move up the screen towards you. The spaceship is constructed out of two graphics characters and the meteors out of one block, showing immense lack of imagination on behalf of the programmer.

Scattered about the screen are other characters which have to be destroyed in order to increase your score. The keyboard controls are Left, Right, Fire and Hyperspace. None of these keys featured a repeat, which meant that dodging meteors on the screen was a difficult and clumsy task. The hyperspace key had a limited use, its action being to place you randomly across the screen. Suffice it to say that I was not impressed by Meteor Run and found it tedious in the extreme by the end of the first go.

The Breakout program faired little better, being a standard implementation of the original game. It suffered also from the lack of key repeat which made returning the ball an act of luck as opposed to skill. On the whole this tape reminded me of the faltering first attempts of a slow pupil, so I shall reserve my comment to one of 'could be better'.

C.P.

Graphics	10%
Ease of Use	20%
Instructions	20%
Play it Again	20%
Value for Money	10%
Star Quality ★	

ARCADE ACTION

ZX81 (unexpanded)
£4.95
Micromega,
Quantec,
230-236 Lavender Hill,
London SW11 1LE.

Contrary to the label on the tape, these games all loaded and ran in an unexpanded ZX81 — you don't need the 16K RAM. All examples of good, fast, machine code programming: they all loaded first time and the instructions are comprehensive.

In Overtaker, you are driving a car. You have to increase speed and weave in and out of the traffic, and the faster you go, the more you score — unless you crash! An addictive game.

Missile Man is the best implementation I have seen of Invaders on a 1K machine. Four rows of aliens plus one swooping bombard your battery, and the explosions when you hit an alien are impressive. The game plays well and is great fun.

I am surprised that Starfighter Pilot fits into 1K. You can flip in and out of hyperspace, with stars rushing towards you, and in normal space a landscape scrolls towards you with missiles rising from its surface. You destroy them by positioning your gunsight over them, whereupon they explode. It's difficult to get a good score, but fun trying.

Guess what Greedy Gobbler resembles? You have four ghosts chasing you as you eat the food capsules, and the power pills turn the ghosts grey long enough for you to catch them. A clever implementation.

Don't be misled — the last game, Extra Terrestrial, bears no resemblance to the film. You are in an alien spacecraft orbiting the world which you attempt to exterminate.

D.C.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

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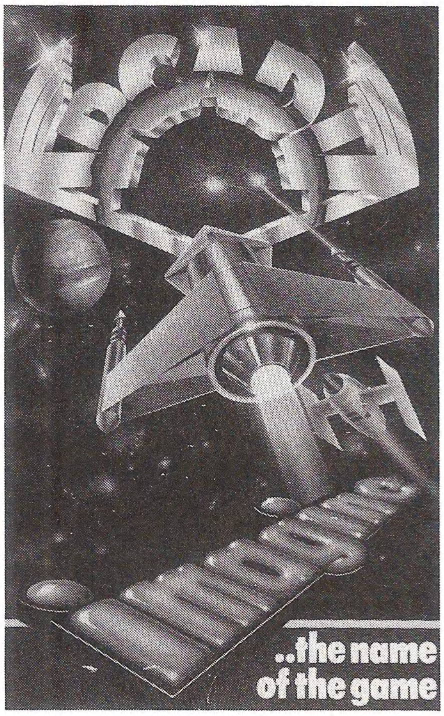
ARCADIA

ZX Spectrum (16K),
£5.50
Imagine Software,
Masons Building,
Exchange Street East,
Liverpool L2 3PN.

The most original twist yet to the basic theme of shooting holes in alien hordes. Arcadia is what you'd perhaps expect to get from turning a pack of interior designers loose to write in 'Invaders' program.

The creatures are mostly beautiful graphic shapes glowing with colour — and quite determined to kill you. Once past the fairly ordinary missiles on Level 1 things get very artistic indeed! Pulsating circles, rotating deltas and stately birds, (amongst others) all descend upon you in turn, raining death and destruction as they go. (Even your spacecraft bears more than a passing resemblance to a Gothic cathedral!)

It's all quite dazzling at first and you die quite regularly whilst trying to master the graphic hordes. To stay alive you have the inevitable laser cannon, and a thrust option which moves you up the screen, seemingly against gravity of some kind, since once you release the control you fall back to the screen base.


..the name of the game

You advance to each new level by surviving long enough on the old one — not an easy task. Arcadia calls for nimble fingers and quick reactions. It is well balanced and gets progressively harder in a suitably infuriating manner.

Well recommended — if for no other reason than that this is the ONLY game in which you're ever gonna get to shoot down a multi-coloured centipede with a Gothic cathedral!

R.H.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★ ★

ASTEROIDS

ZX81 (16K)
£4.95
Mikro-Gen,
24 Agar Crescent,
Bracknell,
Berkshire.

It's baffling. Why does a company with all the makings of a good version of this arcade classic release it before it's ironed out a couple of glaring faults?

The graphics are nice enough: good chunky asteroids that shatter satisfyingly into fragments when you fire at them (five different sizes of fragment, according to the inlay, but who's counting?).

As well as blasting the asteroids themselves, you can also fire at other unidentified flying objects to gain extra points.

There are 10 different speed levels on offer, and on the fastest (1), the action is very fast indeed. I'd hesitate to call these skill levels, though, since as the asteroids slow down, you slow down too.

In practice this means that the slow levels aren't really easier than the fast ones, and have the added hazard that once you have cleared the screen a little, you may nod off during the long periods where nothing happens. Nothing below level 5 is worth considering.

More seriously, beware of the thrust button. Press it and you spin wildly out of control, and taking your finger off the key has no effect. All you can do is relax and enjoy the scenery until you crash into something and are reincarnated (supposing any of your three lives are left).

Because you can't actually avoid any of the asteroids, the skill content of the game is drastically reduced. Much the best tactic, certainly until the screen has been cleared of the larger fragments, is to sit tight with your fingers jammed on the rotate and fire buttons. You can get quite a high score that way and, while you are spinning, you seem to gain some immunity to being hit.

The game usually ends when your fingers go numb and slip off the keyboard. There is an option to use joysticks, but it's probably fortunate that few ZX81 owners have them, otherwise the game could go on all night.

C.G.

Graphics	72%
Ease of Use	48%
Instructions	68%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	30%
Star Quality	★

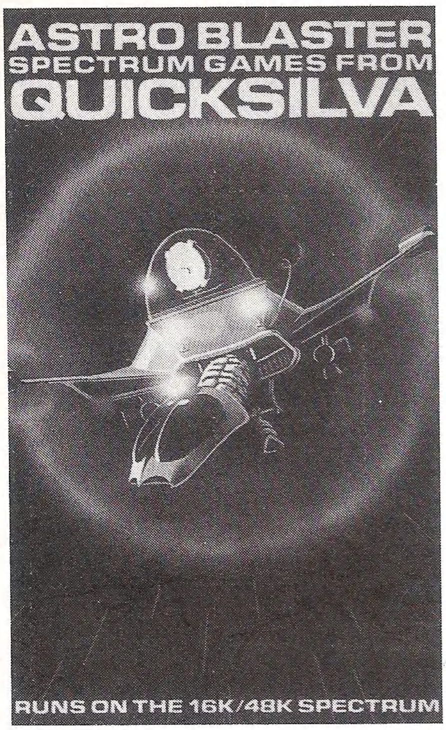
ASTRO BLASTER

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£4.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton SO11 1LL.

Yet another excerpt from the book of the Faluvian Empire was on the inlay card . . . I really must get that book.

This time we have an old familiar theme. Remember the old Space Invaders? Well, this is a game of that ilk, but with differences that make all the difference if you see what I mean.

There are five attack waves, 15 levels of difficulty, meteor storms plus other bad



goodies . . . or do I mean good baddies?

You can play this game with a joystick if you have one, and I would strongly advise that you do.

This game, together with Frenzy (a sort of sister tape) will make compulsive playing for the space/action addict.

B.B.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

ATLANTIS

BBC Micro (32K)
£7.50
IJK Software,
9 King Street,
Blackpool,
Lancashire.

Warning — this game could damage your health! Positively addictive, my upper arms literally ached after I had finished.

Atlantis is an underwater version of the arcade game 'Scramble', and seems to have most of the features of that game, although I could not get far enough to be sure! A game for the advanced player, it is extremely fast right from the start, and uses the BBC's sound and graphics capability to the full.

You have to move past a right to left scrolling underwater landscape avoiding, shooting or bombing mines, obstacles and missiles. I could not get past the first section, but two of my arcade-mad friends, playing simultaneously, managed to reach the caves of the second stage.

Cassette instructions are minimal — how to load (which it did, first time). Screen instructions set the scene and give the key operations, an awkward arrangement: left and right cursor keys for L/R, A and Z for up/down, Space bar or Tab for bombs and shift for missiles.

A high score is not kept and more instructions would have been useful — plus some hints for beginners like myself! But a superb game for expert videogamers.

R.E.

Graphics	95%
Ease of Use	68%
Instructions	20%
Play it Again	68%
Value for Money	78%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

ATTACK OF THE MUTANT CAMELS

Commodore 64 (+ Joystick)
£8.50
Llamasoft,
49 Mount Pleasant,
Tadley,
Hampshire RG26 6BN.

"Earth has been invaded by 90-ft high, laser spitting, neutronium shielded death camels." This is the awesome enemy you must battle with in this fast-moving, colourful game in which you pilot a small jet and attempt to wear down the camels' shields and "destabilise" them.

On loading, there appears an impressive animated introduction offering various skill options including a two-player game. Pressing the fire button transports you to a desert landscape on a starry background, where large camels clump noisily towards you rather like the Landwalkers in *The Empire Strikes Back.*

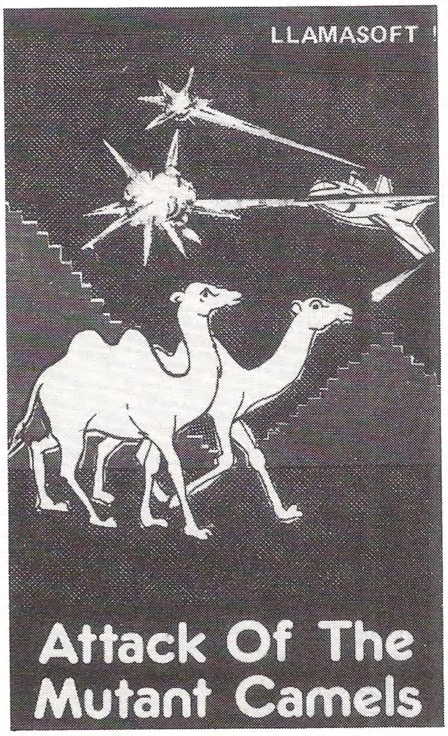
You have to hit the camels with a repeating missile gun while dodging the squealing bombs from their mouths. As you score more hits on a camel, it will turn various dazzling colours before pulsing into oblivion.

Should you succeed in destroying a wave of the beasts, you then enter Trans-sector Hyperwarp, and you must dodge white spiralling rockets as the landscape flashes past at incredible speed. If however the camels reach your end of the sector, you lose the game.

Quite simply a very good game. Sound and graphics are excellent, documentation and instructions are clear, and the action is fast and furious. To play it is to appreciate it. The only criticism could be that it is perhaps a little too difficult!

D.A.

Graphics	89%
Ease of Use	82%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	86%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	


LLAMASOFT
Attack Of The Mutant Camels

AWARI

ZX81 (16K)
£5.95
Understanding Ltd,
The Production Village,
100 Cricklewood Lane,
London NW2 2D5.

Awari is an ancient African game of logic. The game is played using 14 'bowls' each of which may hold any number of 'beans'. Bowls numbered 1 to 6 belong to you, ie you can move the beans out of them, and your 'home' bowl is number 7 on the right. Your objective is to get as many beans as possible and so to beat the computer. Similarly, bowls 8 to 13 at the top 'belong' to the ZX81, and bowl 14 on the left is its 'home'.

The idea of the game is that you may choose one of the bowls numbered from 1 to 6, which contain at least one bean, remove them and place them one at a time in the bowls to the right and anti-clockwise. The ZX81 then chooses from bowls 8 to 13 and moves to the left and anti-clockwise. When you get more proficient, you can investigate the more complicated moves. There are three levels of play, which will accommodate an intelligent eight year old to an adult.

Though the game is basically quite simple, it is more addictive than most non-high-speed games. The game is well set out and has a good amount of intelligently used graphics.

In conclusion, though it is not the most sophisticated ZX81 program on the market, Awari is ideal for all the family. By the way, it loaded first time.

J.W.

Graphics	28%
Ease of Use	67%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	65%
Value for Money	52%
Star Quality ★ ★	

B

BACKGAMMON

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£5.95
CP Software,
17 Orchard Lane,
Prestwood,
Great Missenden,
Buckinghamshire.

Backgammon has been around for quite a time. Its pedigree reaches back to the time of the ancient Egyptians, with tenuous links to games played around 3000 BC.

A computerised version of Backgammon has been the goal of many a programmer, and this version for the ZX Spectrum follows the classical (traditional, not Egyptian!) layout. It is a one player game: just you versus the computer.

The tape loaded perfectly everytime and the cassette inlay contains a summary of the International Backgammon Association Rules together with a brief but explicit introduction to the game for beginners. The screen display is clear and easily understood in colour. In black and white, though, the black pieces merge with the background.

Once you understand what the game is about it is simple to play — but not so easy to win!

Technically, the computer plays a reasonable game. Its play is straightforward and predictable, without any great finesse, but unlike a human player it does not make silly mistakes. It is also fast, taking only about four seconds to decide what to do and then do it.

Do not try to match its speed of play . . . take your time and plan your moves carefully. Like many of the classic games Backgammon is quite addictive, so allow yourself plenty of time to get your own back on the computer!

P.F.

Graphics	75%
Ease of Use	90%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	90%
Value for Money	85%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

BARGAIN BYTES CASSETTE TWO

ZX81 (16K)
£5.00
Richard Shepherd Software,
22 Green Leys,
Maidenhead,
Berkshire SL6 7EZ.

Following the launch of his first ZX81 cassette, Bargain Bytes One, Richard Shepherd is now offering a second: Bargain Bytes Two. As with the first cassette, it features eight varied programs for £5, but there are two extras. Firstly, a short test program at the start enables correct volume levels to be determined, and despatch is now promised within 24 hours of the order being received.

The cassette features Seafaring Adventure in which the player commands a ship and tries to win promotion by his performance in battle. Skillful utilization of resources is vital. Supplies, men and ammunition must be carefully calculated and finely balanced.

When supplies run low, it becomes necessary to return to port for them to be replenished. Naturally, the journey is hazardous and the battles fierce, but a determined player can battle his or her way up the ranks to become First Sea Lord.

Other major games on the cassette are Stock Market, in which the player must make instant buying decisions as market information flashes appear, and Noughts and Crosses, which is on three levels; easy, beatable and impossible. There is also a 'Pub Style' Fruit Machine complete with random holds, systematic nudges and a winnings counter.

A moving graphics Ski Run rounds up the games section.

On the educational front there is a General Knowledge Quiz, (with three levels) Copycat; an alphabetic Simon game, and a profit/break even point calculating money model.

J.W.

Graphics	10%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	55%
Play it Again	47%
Value for Money	65%
Star Quality	★ ★

BLACK CRYSTAL

ZX81 (16K)
£7.50
Carnell Software,
4 Staunton Road,
Slough,
Berkshire SL2 1NT.

Black Crystal is the most ambitious adventure game I've seen for ZX81, with elements of Lord of the Rings grafted on to the adventure format.

You take on the role of warrior, elf or wizard, with corresponding values for physical and spiritual strength, before setting off in the valley of Beroth. Your aim is to retrieve all seven rings of light and eventually, by placing them in exact locations around the black crystal itself, to rid the valley of evil.

The program is large and is divided into six segments preceded by a short load test. Unless you are starting a new game, you enter each segment by specifying a map reference determined in the segment previously played; the order is not fixed in advance.

Myself, I'm not far into the quest yet: it takes some time to master the use of keys controlling movement and weapons, and to discover the right tactics for various monsters. Still, Black Crystal has impressed me by its sheer quantity and generally high quality of presentation. I'm afraid I've become an addict.

C.C.

BLACK CRYSTAL

Graphics	78%
Ease of Use	50%
Instructions	65%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★

BLACK STAR

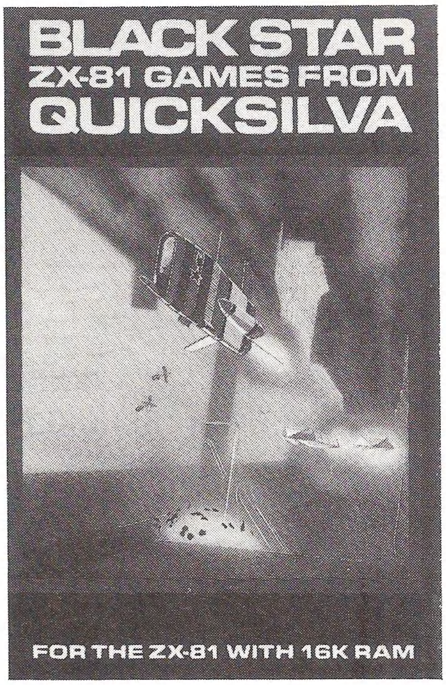
ZX81 (16K)
£4.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton.

Funny how rarely ambitious graphics and an exciting game seem to get together. All the Quicksilva games I've played offer either one or the other — which is a lot better than neither, but not as good as they **could** achieve.

This game has graphics which are always interesting and sometimes dazzling (literally), but it's mostly frills; the game itself is a letdown.

You control a space ship flying down a tunnel which unfolds in 3D before you. The object is to bomb 'energy ducts' (stripey bands running round the circumference of the tunnel) to gain the maximum points before you run out of time. And that's really all there is to it. Like falling off a log.

Unless something was very much amiss with the tape I got, a lot of wishful thinking went into writing the blurb on the cassette insert. The "pursuing aliens" — which appear at the bottom of the screen, and which you can dodge by moving from side to side — aren't much of a thrill. You can easily avoid them by speeding up slightly, as far as I can tell they don't do you any harm even if you just ignore them.



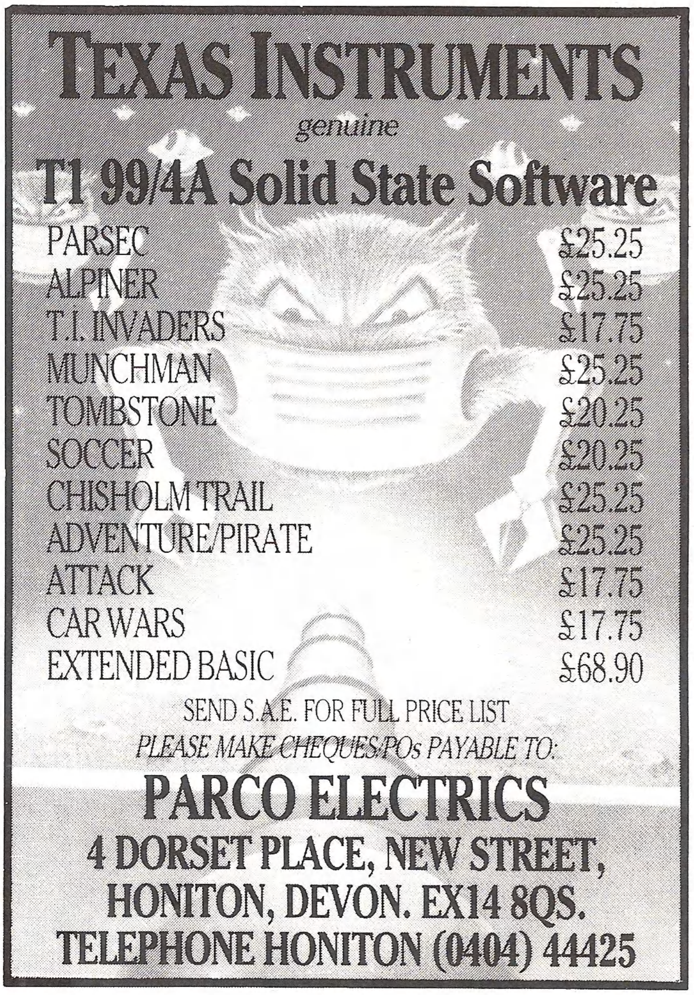
"Eight instrument displays" . . . yes, well, the only display you need to worry about is the one that tells you how many bombs you've got left. The rest are very pretty, but really just trimmings.

I don't know about the "seventeen levels" and "progressive difficulty". At no point was I offered the option of selecting a different skill level, so maybe this just means that you can speed the ship up as you get better. You'll get bored extremely quickly if you don't.

Effortless loading, responsive controls, nice effects, and a high-score table, but all this can't compensate for lack of excitement. Must try harder.

C.G.

Graphics	87%
Ease of Use	40%
Instructions	75%
Play it Again	45%
Value for Money	45%
Star Quality	★



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The program follows the style of that arcade favourite, Frogger and you must negotiate your green coloured friend across first a road populated with fast moving cars and lorries and then over the river by means of turtles and logs. Frogs may be able to swim but if your turtle decides to sink you'll be swept away by the current. Once across with three out of your four frogs you'll be able to score bonus points by catching the flies that appear over the river but, take care that you don't run out of time!

All in all it's a great, fast moving game that any number of people can play and, just to add to the spirit of the thing the program stores the top ten players' names so you can measure your performance. How much are we charging for this minor masterpiece? Just £5.99 all inclusive!

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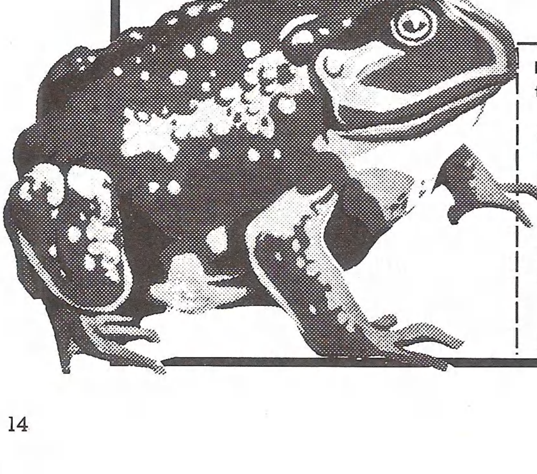

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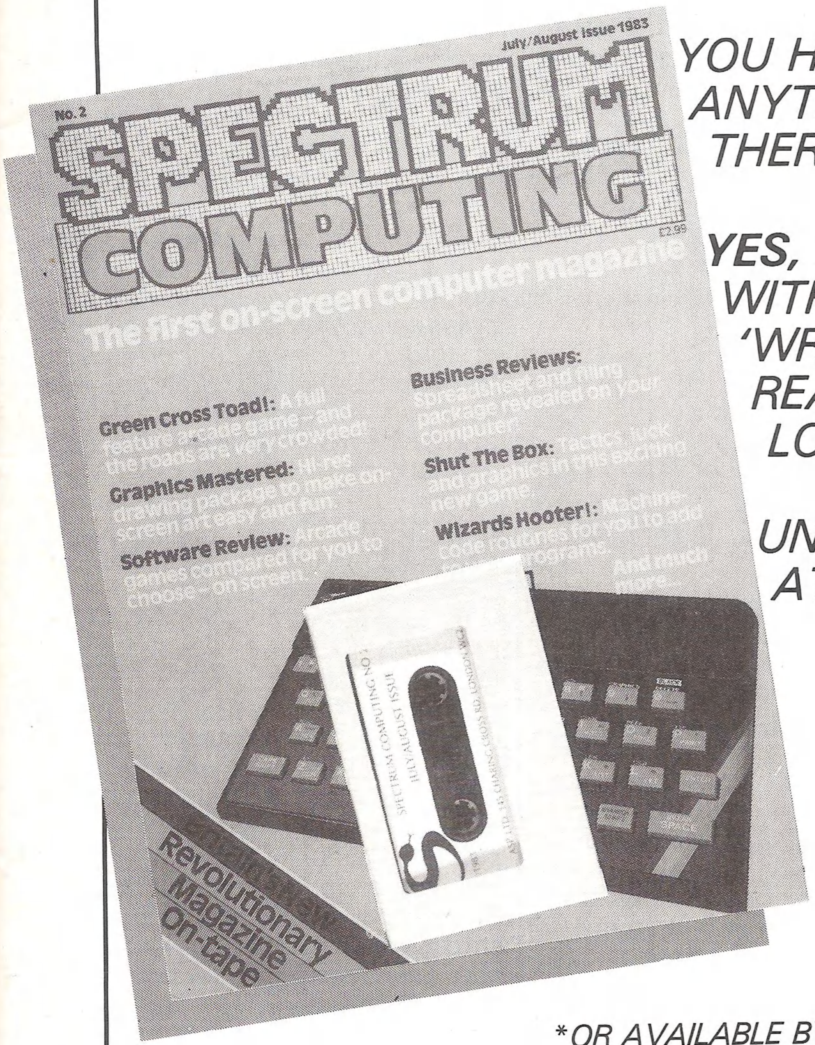
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C

CASSETTE 1

ZX81 (16K)
£2.95
Silicon Software,
24 Short Lane,
Stanwell,
Middlesex TW19 7BQ.

'Elephants Graveyard' is an adventure-type game in which if you can survive five weeks in the jungle you will find yourself at the legendary graveyard. You start with 100,000 Kes (the local currency) with which you can purchase the assistance of natives, as well as supplies of food, guns and tents. Running out of supplies or money to pay the natives leads to an early demise, so a careful balance has to be found at the start. As you progress through the jungle, unpleasant things happen at random — attacks by lions and snakes, quicksand, storms, losing the trail and such like.

The game looks like another ZX81 conversion — it has no user defined graphics and very little sound or colour. There are some minor bugs which suggest it hasn't been thoroughly tested.

Also on the cassette is 'Sales', a marketing simulation game for any number of players, in which you are in charge of an ice cream stall. You start with a working capital of £2 and have to decide how much to spend on advertising and ice cream stock based on the day's weather forecast. I usually ran into a severe liquidity crisis — all my unsold ice cream melted!

Apart from the opening titles, no colour, graphics or sound are used. This program would run as happily on an old-fashioned teletype as on a full colour bells and whistles home computer. Both programs will run on a 16K or 48K ZX Spectrum.

P.G.

Graphics	0%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	45%
Play it Again	40%
Value for Money	40%
Star Quality ★	

CASSETTE TWO

ZX81 (16K)
£5.00
Michael Orwin,
26 Brownlow Road,
Willesden,
London NW10.

Cassette Two contains 10 games in BASIC, dubbed on each side of the cassette in a different order. My first impression of Cassette Two was one of slight disappointment after reading highly enthusiastic reviews of Cassette One. However, after going through the programs for a second time, and taking a closer look at them, I feel there is much to be said for Cassette Two. There is a good selection of games, and the clear graphics show what can be done when you have 16K to play with. All programs need more than 1K.

The games on the cassette are by P.Canter and C.Panayi, except for Laser Bases and Rectangles by Mr Orwin himself, and P.Rushton's Roulette. I found no trouble loading the programs, which all start automatically. The instructions are included in the programs for all but two of them, and rules for these are supplied in an accompanying leaflet.

I'll go through the games one by one.

OTHELLO: The programming in this case is unwise (as in most of the other games on the cassette) with the rules at the beginning of the listing, rather than the end, thus slowing down every GOTO and GOSUB access. You get four options at the beginning of the game: "Do I play my best?", "Fast or slow?", "White or black?" and "Do you want to go first?" The square chosen by the ZX81 is flashed off and on a few times before it makes its move, to show clearly where it is playing. The program points out how many pieces the ZX81 is capturing. There are polite comments on attempted illegal moves and a comment on the game when it is finished. The program display is great, but the program does not play particularly well. There are much stronger (and more expensive) Othello programs on the market.

AWARI: This is a game of strategy, again with a clear, full-screen display. The ZX81 plays quite well, but there is no option on the level of play, and the whole game is over fairly quickly. This program is fairly easy to beat. It provides a good game if you don't think too hard.

LASER BASES: You and the ZX81 each have 10 laser bases. The object — needless to say — is to destroy your opponent's bases. On each turn you have the option to fire, shield or do nothing at all. You are supposed to make your decisions at the same time as the ZX81, when it displays its decision and then asks for yours. After this it displays what has happened to each base and the new positions. I found it hard to resist the temptation of cheating by changing my decisions after seeing what the ZX81 had done. Perhaps the game could be written so that this cheating was not possible.

WORD MASTERMIND: This is a nice variation on the numerical Mastermind games. It has a vocabulary of over 100 words which can be changed fairly easily. The vocabulary is not in the visible program, but you won't find it very hard to get the ZX81 to reveal what words it is holding. This is a very good program, and it really got me thinking.

RECTANGLES: Horrors! The instructions for this game come on a separate sheet. They read like a script for the Monty Python Show. I haven't a clue how to play the game, despite repeated attempts, and I can't work it out from running the program. Perhaps an example of the rules would have helped a little. In its favour, this program has a full-screen display, and a little machine code is included to speed it up.

CRASH: You use the cursor keys to steer your chequered worm to try and trap a black worm, controlled by the zany ZX81, to ensure that it cannot move without hitting you or itself. It is trying to do the same thing to you. Very addictive, although a touch on the slow side. However, if it was any faster, I'm sure I'd lose every time.

ROULETTE: This is a great way to try out your betting system before going to Monte Carlo. There are 10 different ways of betting, and the system to enter your bets is easy to understand. Although the game seems to simulate the rules of 'proper' roulette properly, I found that a system I invented enabled me to amass a vast fortune. I'm tempted now to try the system in real life. When the 'wheel' is spun in this program I think it would be good for the squares on the board to flash or something, rather than just overprint a series of random numbers below the board.

PONTOON: Ho hum, you might think. But you'd be wrong. This program — which features an excellent display of the cards — shows just how much can be done using good graphics when you have 16K to play with.

PENNY SHOOT: In this program, you make a robot shoot at pennies which are raining down from the sky. The introduction to the program was a nice touch, more fascinating than the game itself. A little figure appears to read the instructions as they appear, then turns and shoots a sample penny. This program is not particularly challenging.

GUN COMMAND: This is another moving action game whre you try to intercept missiles traversing the screen. It's OK, but like PENNY SHOOT could be a bit more challenging.

Overall, for the £5 this cassette costs, it represents good value for money, with the good programs outweighing the weaker ones. However, I feel that a few of the lower standard games were added more to make up the numbers than be really good additions to the package. The programs all show how well the somewhat limited graphics of the ZX81 can be made to perform, although they also indicate that there is a temptation to 'dress up' fairly shallow programs in fancy clothes to disguise them. Despite all these comments, it represents a good selection of games. You're sure to find one or two favourites which you'll play over and over again.

G.C.

Graphics	20%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	56%
Play it Again	62%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★	

CASSETTE THREE

ZX81 (16K)
£5.00
Michael Orwin,
26 Brownlow Road,
Willesden,
London NW10 9QL.

Eight programs on one cassette? Sounds ominous, last time I got one of these, the programs were so poor that they could have been copied out of the manual. Well, could this be different?

The first program is called 'Starship Trojan' and the idea is that your starship is damaged and you have to repair it before becoming asphyxiated, dying of radiation, plugging into a supernova or some other gruesome death. The graphics on this are quite good, but the actual program was a bit slow for me. The second game is called 'Star Trek' (original!!!). This is a good version of the well known (you said it) space game. Again, because it was in BASIC I found it a bit slow but if you do not mind waiting around a little you may find it very good. The next program is called 'Princess of Kraal'. Quite predictably this is another adventure game — well it is not just another! With a visual map, different levels and a whole host of dangers, let alone 100 different difficulty levels it makes for a very addictive game. The idea of 'Martian Cricket' is to get from one side of the screen to the other without hitting the balls being constantly hurled at you. Though this game is simple it also becomes addictive. Of the remaining four games the one that caught my eye first was 'Kalabriasz' which is quoted as being the world's silliest card game, and it lives up to its name! Next comes 'Cube' which is a very well written simulation program of that dreaded mind-bender.

Coming a very close seventh and eighth are 'Battle' and 'Secret Message', both of which I found reasonably good.

I cannot comment on the documentation as I did not receive any. But I am assured that it is about six A4 pages long and comprehensive (it would have to be for some of these games). Altogether it is a well produced, good value for money cassette with eight very good mediocre games on it.

J.W.

Graphics	15%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	N/A
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★	

CASSETTE FOUR

ZX81 (16K)
£5.00
Michael Orwin,
26 Brownlow Road,
Willesden,
London NW10 9QL.

Michael Orwin seems to have got into the habit of selling cassettes of eight games all of which could have been sold separately for six pounds a piece, whilst he sells eight on one high quality cassette for £5. The only way I can do true justice to these programs is by looking at one on its own as if it was a different cassette.

(i) 'ZX-Scramble' has been written and marketed by other people, but this is by far the best version I have seen for the ZX81. The graphics are excellent and the speed is incredible even for a machine code program.

(ii) 'Gunfight'. This is one of the arcade type games which I definitely have not seen before on the ZX81. Although the name is misleading the idea is that you are one of two cowboys on the screen and whilst not hitting the stage coach which moves steadily up the screen, or one of the many cacti, you must try to shoot your opponent. The graphics are excellent, and this is definitely the best one-or-two player graphics games that I have seen for the ZX81 to-date.

(iii) 'Invader'. Yes I know, another invaders game and you've seen them all before, haven't you!! But this one is actually better than any other I have seen on the ZX81. The graphics are far better as you have three characters for each invader. The only thing that I found difficult was that the game did not stop and restart when you are hit.

(iv) 'Galaxy Invaders'. This is a very good machine code version of the Galaxians game with very 'pretty' sweeping aliens.

(v) 'Snakebite'. This is not quite as graphically mind blowing as the last four, but with the ability to build walls, lay anthills and vary the speed it becomes a very addictive game. Oh I nearly forgot, the idea of the game is to eat the snake's tail first before it (the snake, that is) eats you.

(vi) 'Life'. A cleverly written version of the well-known game with good graphics.

(vii) 3D 'Tic-Tac-Toe'. This is the only BASIC game on the tape, which means it is slower. But it is an advanced and addictive version of the game.

(viii) 'Fungaloids'. Last but definitely not least we come to the most original game, Fungaloids, which is easily as addictive as Invaders. Although the game is original there was no need to make the game so obscure! It has vague similarities to missile command, as the idea is to bomb the fungus as it grows shedding spores. A weird but definitely wonderful game.

If each game was on a separate tape and selling for £5 each I would still recommend them. but all on one for £5. . . .! This is the sort of value for money just not been seen before for any personal computer. It is interesting to note that out of the many software companies in this country, Michael Orwin is one of the few which has managed to continue to grow even after the ZX Spectrum was announced.

Without sounding pushy I would like to conclude this review by saying — if you have a ZX81 and you like games, then you should buy Michael Orwin's Cassette 4.

J.W.

Graphics	30%
Ease of Use	68%
Instructions	40%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	78%
Star Quality ★ ★	

CATACOMBS

ZX81 (16K)
£5.95
J.K. Greye Enterprises,
16 Park Street,
Bath,
Avon BA1 2TE.

"You are alone and lost in the catacombs, how much gold can you find, and how long can you survive?" This game doesn't come up to some of the other adventure games now available. Keys 1-8 move you in the direction indicated on the keys (1-4 diagonally as shown by the graphics character on the keys). The rooms and passages only appear as you move into them and you may find food, gold or monsters. If you beat the monsters or find food, your strength is incremented. you may try to run away from the monsters but they will follow you. Try tunnelling to escape them by Shifting keys 5-8. Although acquired skill will help you, the result of a battle with a monster seems a little too random, and the novice gets killed a little too quickly to gain much skill at each attempt. This brings us to the major disturbing factor of this program; once loaded, the game will automatically RUN and will then take roughly two minutes in FAST mode (with the screen a complete blank) to set up each level. Unfortunately, to the novice it appears that the computer is spending more time setting the stage than the player is playing! We are told that there are an infinite number of levels but also that there is an exit on each level!

P.F.

Graphics	24%
Ease of Use	18%
Instructions	26%
Play it Again	25%
Value for Money	32%
Star Quality ★	

CATTERPILLAR

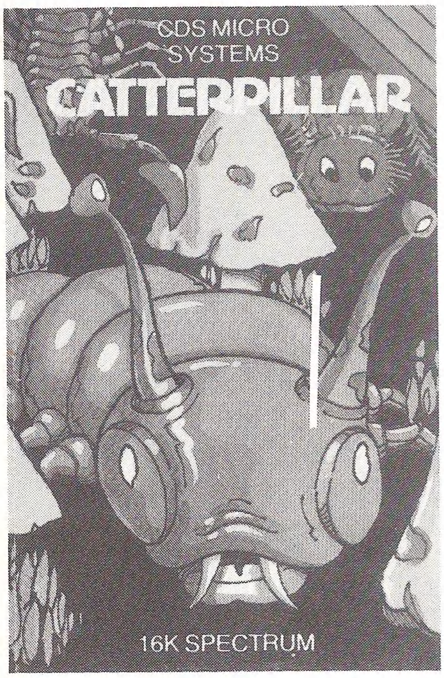
ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.95
CDS Micro Systems
10 Westfield Close,
Tickhill,
Doncaster,
South Yorkshire DN11 9LA.

A blue spider, a green flea, a red scorpion and a purple caterpillar are your main foes in this game. Try to destroy the caterpillar a segment at a time as it descends on you through a field of mushrooms. If it touches your gun you are dead.

Each time the caterpillar touches a mushroom it moves one stage lower — and if the mushroom is red, it drops straight to the bottom of the screen.

While all this is going on, a yoyo-esque spider is doing its utmost to bounce on you, while clearing the mushrooms from the bottom of the screen. If it succeeds, the flea comes hurtling down, leaving a trail of mushrooms behind it.

Points are scored for destroying anything on the screen except yourself in this highly complicated arcade game — which could be highly enjoyable too, were it not for the limitations of the ZX Spectrum keyboard.



A joystick is a must for a game like this, but the program doesn't provide one. Matters aren't improved by the keys chosen for control. With one hand on the cursor keys and the other on the bottom row for firing, you could tie yourself in knots once the action hots up. A good game, let down by its hardware.

N.W.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	65%
Instructions	85%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★

CAVERNS OF MARS

Atari 800 (16K)
£29.99
Atari Distributors
Contact:
Atari International (UK) Ltd,
Atari House,
Railway Terrace,
Slough,
Berkshire SL2 5BZ.

Leading deep into the planet Mars is a twisting, tortuous tunnel at the bottom of which is a space craft landing pad.

Fly your ship into the caverns of Mars and I guarantee the next few minutes of your life will be one mad, exciting yet concentrated rush. There are several stages to this vertically scrolling game, each one increasing in difficulty.

Boosting your fuel supply is your first task by navigating your ship through a narrow shaft, which requires plenty of concentration, and bombing the fuel dumps positioned on the jagged sides of the tunnel, which calls for split-second timing.

Once you have successfully travelled through that stage without crashing into the rocky sides, stage two awaits you. Now the screen gets really hectic with alien creatures swarming through the shaft. You must avoid their flight path or kill them with your laser guns. This stage of the game is really tricky and it's very easy to lose a life here.

Section three has the cavern narrowing more. It is now divided into sections which are accessed by barriers that you must cross when open. These have a nasty habit of appearing suddenly at random taking you, sometimes fatally, by surprise.

Three more phases remain which are again more difficult to navigate. If you successfully do so your chance to complete the game is in sight. But you could lose everything if you don't land your space ship accurately on the landing pad.

CAVERNS
OF
MARS

Then it can be so frustrating you want to throw your Atari through your television screen. That's probably what makes it one of the most compulsive and challenging games Atari's APX catalogue has produced.

E.J.

Graphics	76%
Ease of Use	77%
Instructions	62%
Play it Again	52%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★ ★

CC POKER

Dragon 32
£7.95
Compusense,
PO Box 169,
Palmers Green,
London N13.

I'm no card sharp but I was pleasantly surprised by this game. Card games appeal to me for their ability to engage people in a subtle battle of wits. How does a computer overcome this?

After entering your name you are sitting at the table pitted against Rocky, Harry and Sam. I would suspect some conspiracy if I didn't know better.

The fast flow of action, assisted by machine language subroutines, maintains an air of tension. Sound effects cunningly imitate card handling and highlight other aspects of the game.

You start with a stake of $100 (it's an import from America by Spectral Associates) and the object is to double your money. No previous experience necessary. All players' stakes are displayed, added to and, of course, taken away. You may start the gullible sucker, but as you learn you have a fifty-fifty chance of success.

On higher levels of difficulty (there are five) you increase the frequency of bluffing and limit of betting.

It's the neat graphics which captivated me. An absorbing game which has addictive potential — the sting in any game!

M.P.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	90%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	90%
Value for Money	100%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★ ★

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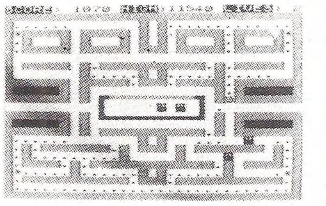

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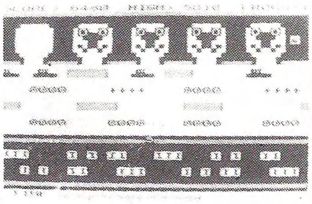

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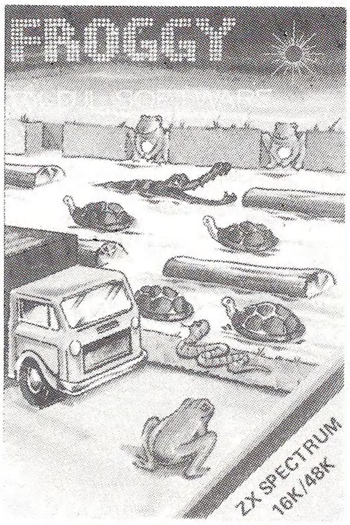

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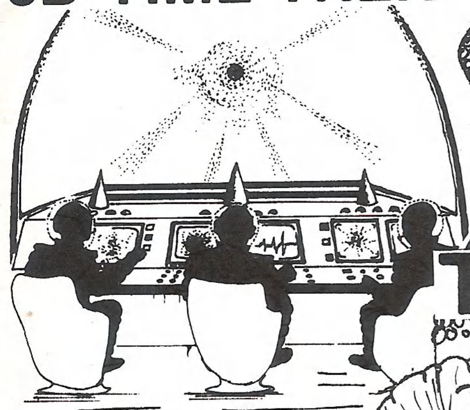

At last a 3D game for the VIC! Although badly wounded, you are determined to seek and destroy the marauding space pirates who have now dispersed around the galaxy in search of fresh prey. A brilliant Startrek game with a difference — spectacular 3D graphics and real arcade actions.

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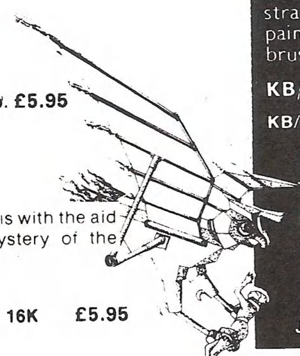

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Once you enter, the only way out is with the aid of a key which unlocks the mystery of the Pharaoh's tomb.

KB	VIC 20	16K	£5.95

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Enter the realms of fantasy with this superb high resolution, multi-colour graphical text adventure. Choose your role as a fighter with armour or a magician with spells to do battle with the fearfull fire breathing RED DRAGON and many other horrific monsters in THE DUNGEONS with 100 rooms, many with ingeneous traps. First of the text adventures that will keep you enthralled and frustrated for a very long time if you use the fast save facility or give up and have a new adventure.

K.B.	VIC 20	16K	£5.95

KRAZY KONG

An E-XPANDE-D screen, large graphics, rolling barrels, hammer, fireballs, lifts, handbags and umbrellas as you try to rescue the damsel

KB/JS	VIC 20	16K	£7.90

SLAP DAB

An exciting game based on the arcade game PAINTER which combines fast action with strategy. Giant insects hiding under the old paint surface are released by your paint brush.

KB/JS	VIC 20	UNEXP	£5.95
KB/JS	SPECTRUM	16K/48K	£4.95

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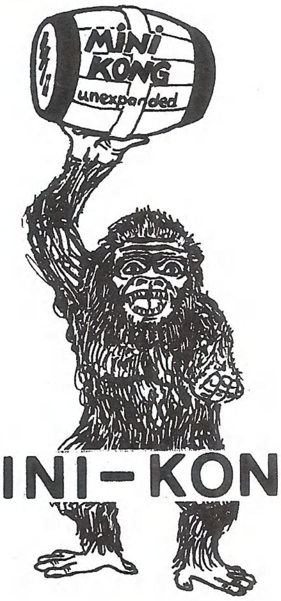

MINI-KONG

For UNEXP from the writer of Krazy Kong comes the equally brilliant Mini-Kong. You will wonder how he managed to cram so much in the unexpanded VIC.
Brilliant multi-colour graphics, expanded screen, lift, rolling barrels, ladders, running score/HI-score and not to forget the hand bag bonus in this all M/C presentation.

K.B./J.S.	VIC 20	UNEXP	£5.95

FROGRUN

Popular arcade game. All machine code with brilliant colour graphics and sound effect. Features include snakes, crocodiles, lady frogs, turtles, cars, lorries and logs.

KB/JS	VIC 20	Unexp.	£5.95
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KB/JS	VIC 20	16K	£5.95

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CENTIPEDE

BBC Micro (32K)
£8.05
Superior Software,
69 Leeds Road,
Bramhope,
Leeds.

This program, like most of Superior's products loads in two sections, the first being a short program to identify the suppliers and the second part loading automatically. This program loaded first time every time without any problems. The instructions displayed after loading are clear and concise, but do not include tips. The keys used are Z, X and COPY, and are sensibly chosen.

The aim of the game is to stop the centipede reaching the bottom of the screen and eating you. You score 50 points for destroying a section of the body and 100 for a head. To reach a high score, the best tactic is to break the centipede into as many sections as possible, all consisting of just a head worth 100 points.

All the expected items are there including snails, flies and spiders, which gain you points, and mushrooms which act as shields for the centipede. Centipedes appear in blue, green and red with increasing difficulty.

Six skill levels and a high score table for the top five are provided. The screen display is well laid out and smooth in action and the game varies in its start up position and paths taken.

D.C.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	71%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

CENTIPEDE

ZX81 (16K)
£4.95
dk' tronics,
23 Sussex Road,
Gorleston,
Great Yarmouth.

Yet another twist to shooting down the attacking aliens. These particular creatures take the form of a segmented attack craft that moves from side to side on the screen, descending each time it hits either the frame at the sides or one of the randomly placed obstructions. You have a number of 'bases' (1-5. . .your choice) and you lose a base if you are hit by one of the alien's bombs or if they descend to 'ground level'. You may fire your laser cannon at the attackers, and if you hit a segment it will be destroyed, but if your hit is in the middle then the alien will split into two and both halves will continue independently. As the attackers are destroyed — or destroy your bases, they will be replaced. As the game proceeds the attackers will become more numerous and will also start to drop bombs on you! You may choose the breakdown — 20 for a novice! Instructions appear on-screen at the start of the game. The top 10 scores may be recorded by name, and remain in the memory until you either switch off or alter the speed or number of bases. An innovative game with enough preset variation to appeal to all. Fast and entertaining.

P.F.

Graphics	62%
Ease of Use	68%
Instructions	57%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

CHALLENGE

ZX81 (unexpanded)
£4.95
Micromega,
Quantec,
230-36 Lavender Hill,
London SW11 1LE.

Five programs on one tape, all on the theme of challenging the player's skill. The games all loaded first time, and the tape is accompanied by a booklet of comprehensive playing instructions.

Two of the games, Brands Hatch and Road Race, involve negotiating a course, using only left and right instructions.

These I found virtually impossible to master, and continually bounced off the sides of the course. Road Race is marginally easier as you are at least shown a steering wheel indicating which direction to go in.

Cartoon Man is rather pointless it merely consists of moving a figure, cleverly animated, I will admit, across the screen at different speeds.

Juggler uses the same figure, this time trying to catch four moving objects. If one hits the floor you lose a life. I soon got bored.

Meteor Strike displays a map of the world which cleverly rotates left or right. The object is to avoid a meteor storm descending from the top of the screen by moving the world so that the meteors land in the sea. The display is so near the top of the screen that you cannot see the meteors in time. But this was by far the best game.

D.C.

Graphics	69%
Ease of Use	10%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	65%
Star Quality ★	

CHAMPIONS

Dragon 32
£5.95
Peaksoft,
7 Hawthorn Crescent,
Burton-on-Trent,
Staffordshire.

This is a textual adventure game, and the challenge is to become a top football club manager and get to the top of the divison within a season of 20 games.

Promotion is then assured, and, ultimately, if you top the first division you are entered in the European Cup. Don't ask — I've only got to the second division!

You start by giving your club its name and, given a pool of money, you're on your own buying and selling players.

Players have a skill rating which affects their price and your chance of success. On pressing the P key your match result is displayed followed by the league table and then the news — some good, some bad.

It sounds dull unless you have a burning ambition to be involved with all the routine of management. But this is what it is — a management simulation. At least a couple of hours is needed to play this game and it's a pity that there is no game save facility. You switch off and you're back in the fourth division. I'm sure there's a lot of interest in football management and it certainly entertained a few of my friends. To maintain that interest these games would have to transcend the specialist barrier and initially 'Champions' does. It is fast moving, clear in its display of information and witty too.

I enjoyed the news flashes — "Brian Clough says you're rubbish, morale soars" — which gives some credibility to the character you imagine yourself to be. Unfortunately, for me, the novelty soon wore off and the routine of management made it hard to persist.

M.P.

Graphics	0%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

CHAMPIONSHIP DARTS

Dragon 32
£5.95
Shadow Software,
8 Hallgate,
Thurnscoe,
Nr. Rotherham.

This clever implementation of the popular pub games makes it possible to get involved in the exciting atmosphere of a championship darts match without knocking chunks of plaster out of the kitchen wall!

The initial screen gives you a choice of starting play or viewing the instructions — which are almost unnecessary as playing the game is simple yet very effectively done. You start a match by entering the names of the two players and selecting who throws first.

The playing screen consists of a realistic dartboard drawn in hi-res, and an area that contains information on the players' current score, who is throwing, how many darts are left to throw, and a scoring table at the bottom of the screen.

Throwing a dart is carried out in two steps. Firstly, a spot moves very quickly around the dartboard and you select the number you wish to aim at by stopping that spot over that number by hitting any key.

Having done that, a small cursor moves rapidly across the scoring table which has doubles, trebles and so on marked on it, and once again you must stop the cursor to determine your score on that throw.

Sounds simple enough, but it proved to be an absorbing task trying to score that magic treble 20! There are some simple sound effects in the game culminating in a splash of colour and sound when you hit 180!

C.D.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	85%
Value for Money	85%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

CHESS

BBC Micro (16K)
£7.95
Program Power,
5 Wensley Road,
Leeds LS7 2LX.

In this game of chess for the BBC Micro you will find all the standard computer chess features that you would expect to find on any normal game. Some of the more notable inclusions are the ability to castle and to capture pieces by en passant.

All the moves are entered in algebraic notation, although this is not as easy as it could be because the board is not labelled on-screen but instead a labelled board is included in the instructions.

You have six levels of play to choose from. On level one the computer generally takes about five seconds to reply to your move. The computer is also very quick to chastise you for an illegal move. Included in the game is the option to save the game to tape.

Apart from playing a normal game the computer will allow you to set up positions on the board and then play them through to their conclusion. Also included is the option of playing a 'blitz' game against the computer with a 10 second time limit on each move.

For reasons of speed the game is written entirely in machine code. The display is produced using Mode 7 graphics and while it isn't stunning, it is perfectly adequate for the game. My one criticism of the game is that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the pieces, for instance between the Queen and the Bishop.

The game should provide a good few hours of amusement for both novice and intermediate chess players alike.

A.S.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	59%
Instructions	81%
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	69%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

CHESS

ZX81 (unexpanded)
£2.95
Artic Computing,
396 James Reckitt Avenue,
Hull HU8 0JA.

A complete chess-playing program and all packed into 1K of memory. The memory limitation means that certain details of the game have to be omitted: you can't capture en passant or achieve pawn promotion. The program is in machine code and loaded at the third try, but it only takes 25-30 seconds to load anyway.

There are two programs on each side and the choice of which is loaded determines the opening move, either white queen's pawn or white king's pawn moved. Moves are entered number-letter of the piece to be moved followed by the number-letter of the square to move to. Only valid moves are allowed.

The ZX81 seems to choose its move by testing all possible moves and then selecting the move which captures your highest valued piece, if any. Although this makes it vulnerable to traps, it still produces play which needs some thought to beat. The screen display is small — one ZX character square equals one board square — and pieces are represented by letters, P, Q and K for example, in normal (black) and inverse (white). The display can cause confusion and I mistakenly moved the wrong piece once or twice due to this.

The instructions are minimal. The rules and piece moves are not explained.

R.E.

Graphics	50%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	30%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★	

CHESS

ZX81 (16K)
£6.95
Sinclair Research,
Stanhope Road,
Camberley,
Surrey GU15 3PS.

Seeing how much of a chess game can be fitted into a limited memory seems to have become a game in itself amongst programmers. Psion has put in its bid with a comprehensive version for the 16K ZX81.

The game has all the standard features found on computer chess programs plus some extra features which make the game that little bit more acceptable. These are en passant captures and castling. Moves are input in standard algebraic notation and a diagram of the board labelling is given in the instructions.

This game also allows you to set up your own board positions and then play them out. This also means that you can change the game parameters in the middle of a game or even to change sides.

There are six levels of play with the lowest taking about five seconds to execute in full and the highest literally taking hours to think about and reply to a move. The screen display is adequate though not stunning, using letters to stand for the pieces.

Included as a bonus on the other side of the tape is a program which simulates the action of a chess clock. A welcome addition for someone like me who prefers playing against flesh and blood to being humiliated by a computer.

C.P.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

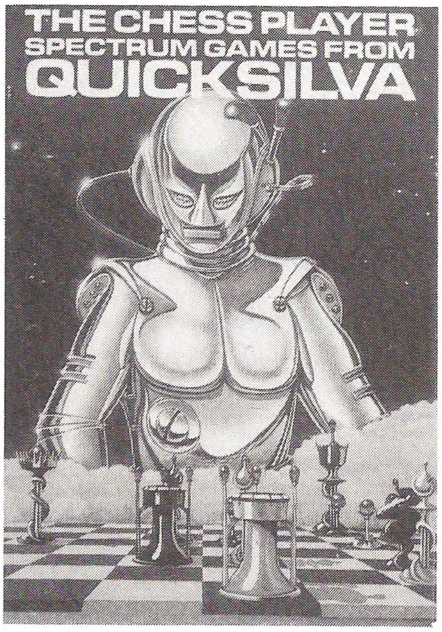
THE CHESS PLAYER

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£6.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton S011 1LL.

One of many ZX Spectrum chess programs on the market, Quicksilva's version adds a new twist to the game with an impressive piece of synthesised speech and personality, in the form of the Chess Player. This evil being has decided that the Earth's fate is to be decided by a game of chess between him and a human challenger.

The game opens with the Chess Player announcing himself very clearly through the ZX Spectrum's beeper. You are then asked whether you are using a black and white or colour television, so that the most suitable colours for each can be set.

There are six levels of play, each with varying reply times. The Chess Player plays quite a respectable game on the lowest level, although perhaps not as strong as some other chess games on the market.



Throughout the game the Chess Player displays his personality with such tactful remarks as "That was a pathetic move" or "Do you know what you're doing?", and occasionally admits that "This is harder than I thought", "This is a good game" or "That was a good move". Sometimes though, his comments do not tie up with your actions.

Quicksilva has built itself a good reputation for high quality software and The Chess Player does not let them down. The synthesised speech is impressive and the graphics pleasant, making this a very nice game indeed.

I.O.

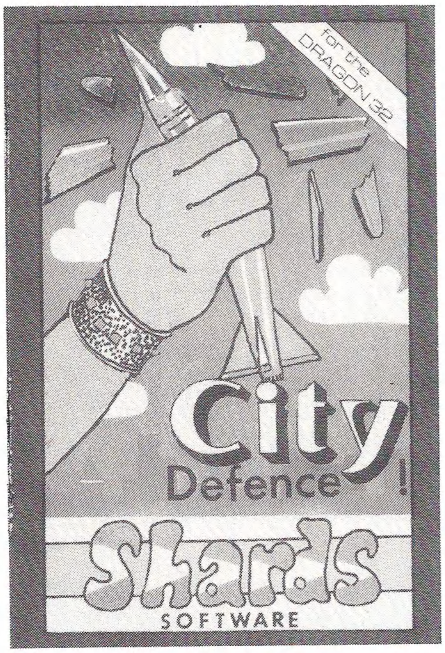
Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	85%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	90%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

CITY DEFENCE

Dragon 32
£5.75
Shards Software,
10 Park Vale Court
Vine Way,
Brentwood,
Essex CM14 4UR

This familiar arcade game is now being produced in many versions. Like Invaders, it must be the bread and butter of many software companies, otherwise they wouldn't produce these lookalikes. So how does this one compare?

A conventional interpretation in Mode 1 with few surprises. The familiar city is being bombarded by streamers and you have to destroy them with a laser guided by your joystick. A colourful display showing your city with some excellent explosive effects, and good accompanying sound.



The movement of the cursor isn't particularly smooth, and took some time to get used to. Once you've started to zap the streamers, your score begins to mount up on screen. Annoyingly, though, you lose 100 points when you succeed in wiping out the required number of streamers and your city is restored.

Bearing in mind the new wave of machine code games, this must be a poor, albeit cheaper-than-average version. You get what you pay for — not arcade standard but good of its kind.

M.P.

Graphics	85%
Ease of Use	90%
Instructions	100%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

COMPUTER SCRABBLE

Apple II
£24.95 (disc)
Little Genius,
22 Inverness Street,
London NW1 7HJ.

Scrabble by computer is comparable to chess by computer — it's useful for solitary players — but how good is it? Can the computer's in-built (and limited) dictionary cope with the challenge of a mind comparable to the Concise Oxford?

It not only coped, but more than admirably, giving this Scrabble fanatic several tough games.

The instructions were easy to follow — seasoned Scrabble players will already know the rules of the game — and the graphics were good with a clear screen layout, although after an hour of play my eyes were beginning to tire from gazing at luminescent characters.

A beginner to the game might find it inconvenient and distracting to have to call up information such as values and distribution of characters (couldn't this have been printed along with the instructions?) but the program did allow you to do almost anything you would normally do in a Scrabble game, including shuffling and changing letters. My biggest complaint was that it allowed you to cheat — it was too easy to overcome the computer's challenge — and I found it a little odd when the computer challenged words such as sorrel — gastronomes need not play! Four levels of speed and play added to the enjoyment and all in all I found it a compulsive program.

J.C.

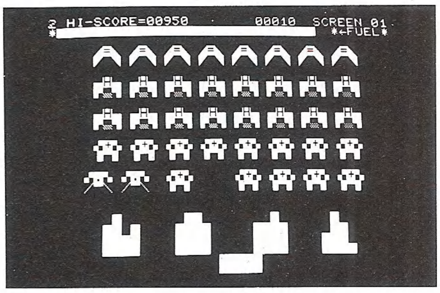
Graphics	20%
Ease of Use	45%
Instructions	52%
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

COSMIC ALIENS

PET (8K)
£8.00
Supersoft,
10-15 Canning road,
Wealdstone,
Harrow,
Middlesex.

A real demonstration of what is possible with the PET! Very cunning usage of the available graphics produces a different and exciting space game. Cosmic Aliens begins as a 'Space Invaders' type game then becomes and 'Asteroids' battle and ends up as a sharp shooting session to earn fuel and ammo!

You start by having to clear a screenful of Invaders, which are superbly drawn (for a change), using up your limited supply of fuel in the process. Hitting the 'Mother Ship' earns you points — but beware. This Mother Ship can fight back! It drops bombs which move very fast, and go straight through defences! Hiding will avail you nothing!



After clearing the little bugs away, the screen wipes into a 'meteorite storm' in which — if you're good enough — you can re-charge your tanks by shooting out the correct asteroids and avoiding the rest!

After that, assuming you're still alive comes 'Phase Three', in which you have to shoot through a maze type display to hit PART of a moving alien ship. Only part, mind, and it is moving!

More than that I refuse to reveal — life must hold some surprises after all. Suffice to say that 'Cosmic Aliens' get my vote for 'Game of the Month'!

R.H.

Graphics	92%
Ease of Use	90%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	94%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★ ★

COSMIC GUERILLA

ZX81 (16K)
£3.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton S01 1LL.

Cosmic Guerilla could be said to be a cousin of Space Invaders, in that you control a moving gun at the base of the screen which zooms to and fro as you attempt to destroy the aliens.

However, the scenario is quite different; the alien 'guerillas' sneak in from both sides of the screen at once, trying to reach the centre where they steal a supply of 'pod' which they then have to take back the way they came.

Thus you have irregular groups of aliens moving independently in different directions at the same time; their movement is in erratic bursts so that it can be difficult to judge when any individual will take his next 'step'. A randomly generated saucer passes periodically across the top of the screen, à la Space Invaders; you get a higher score for successfully hitting this.

Your job is to shoot the guerillas before they return home with their stolen goods. If you hit one on its return journey, its 'pod' will be abandoned there until another alien comes to fetch it; as these black blobs block the energy pulses from your gun the game becomes more difficult as more of them are left lying around.

The aliens can also destroy you with their own bombs (you have three 'lives'). You have shields against these, but as the bombs do not come often and the shields tend to get in your own way, I found that it was a good policy to blast them out of existence at the beginning of each game.

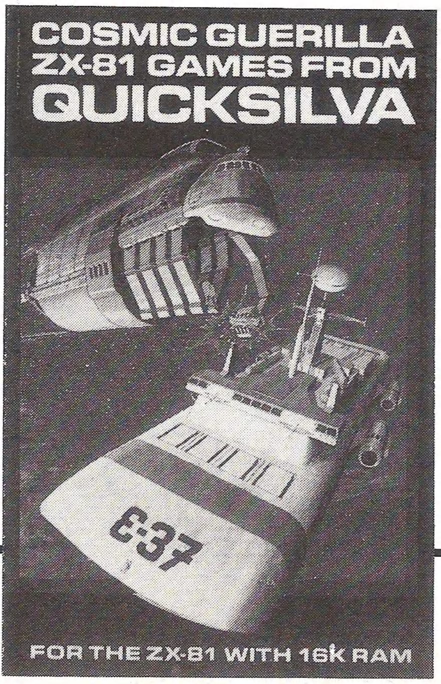
You have a choice of three speeds, and score is displayed on screen. High scorers can enter their names in a 'hall of fame' at the end of the game.

Having played other games of the same type, I did not find that it held my interest for long; but the sneaky way that the aliens move and their tendency to attack in bunches is a novelty.

The game is well produced, loads easily and runs smoothly; I found that the controls respond almost too quickly — you need a very light touch to position your gun where you want it. Instructions are minimal, but the only controls necessary are Right, Left and Fire. The program can be used with the QS Sound and Characters board, if available.

C.C-R.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	40%
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★



COSMIC RAIDERS

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.95
Mikro-Gen,
24 Agar Crescent,
Bracknell,
Berkshire.

A top quality professional product is what I've come to expect from Mikro-Gen, and Cosmic Raiders did not disappoint me.

You have to navigate your spacecraft over an alien terrain of sky scrapers and mountains whilst defending yourself against the deadly attentions of sundry Grubbers, Escorts and Interceptors.

Your aim is to rescue abducted humanoids and destroy the aliens' Mastership. Destruction of this latter target automatically moves you to a higher level.

The screen display is split, with an inset at screen top showing a panoramic view of your and the aliens' positions whilst the colourful main screen display shows a smaller area of the battlefield.

Control is via '4' and '2' keys for up and down, 'S' for thrust and '0' for rocket firing. The left hand bottom row keys reverse your direction and the right hand bottom row keys operate a 'Smart Bomb'.

Instructions are concise but adequate and loading is straightforward and reliable.

High-quality graphics, and the game is fast and great fun to play. Highly recommended.

D.J.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★

COSMOS

BBC Micro (16K)
£5.95
The Software House,
46 Oxford Street,
London WC1.

If you have played the Galaxians type of arcade games, then you'll like Cosmos. Written in a combination of BASIC and Hi-Res, Cosmos gives you three lives with the Space bar letting you start another game.

Cosmos uses red and yellow aliens on a black background, with two different types of alien. Your score is shown at the top of the screen, with the highest score you have reached.

To shoot down and destroy the aliens as they advance on you, use the Space bar and then the arrows to move out of their way. But using the keyboard with the BBC machine is certainly slower than using a paddle or joystick with other machines . . . So you need to have very fast reflexes to reach a high score.

If you think its easy, sit down and try to reach a large score. You'll find it needs nimble fingers to succeed.

Another value for money game at only £6 including VAT.

N.A.

Graphics	71%
Ease of Use	79%
Instructions	38%
Play it Again	61%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

COSMOS

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£4.95
Abbex Electronics Ltd,
20 Ashley Court,
Great Northway,
London NW5.

Abbex came into the market back in October of last year with two ZX Spectrum games programs. We are yet (April) to see anything new from them which seems to suggest that the original games are of exceptional quality. Of the two, Spookyman and Cosmos, the only one that really caught my eye was Cosmos (surely the world has seen enough 'Pac-man' copies by now!).

The scenario of the game is as follows: you are in charge of a fleet of ships which must be protected from successive waves of aliens and from meteorities which just happen to come along. Each time either a meteorite or an alien hits a ship in the fleet it is destroyed. If you manage to destroy the total population of aliens within a quadrant of the fleet then another wave will appear in greater numbers, and the fleet will be regenerated.

Graphically the game is very good and highly addictive. The only niggles that I have are that I would have liked different space ships for each wave and secondly, your movements around the quadrant could be smoother. Even taking these into account, it is a very well-assembled game, which is just different enough to interest someone who has already seen many other space games and become addicted. Recommended.

J.W.

Graphics	75%
Ease of Use	65%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

CRAZY BALLOONS

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.75
A & F Software,
830 Hyde Road,
Manchester M18 7JD.

The idea of Crazy Balloons is to negotiate a hot air balloon around the course shown on the screen. If you manage this then the course is made harder by the addition of moving blocks. If you get further still then the blocks appear randomly over the screen trying to cause you to crash. At certain points along the course there are short cuts for which you get extra points, but they are often near impossible to negotiate. There is a set number of points for completing a course and a time bonus depending on speed.

Though the idea of the game may seem simple, it is far from easy to play. It is also highly addictive. Unfortunately it does not quite have the substance to stand up for itself on a cassette.

A good original game which is fun but which does not, on its own, stand up to some of the better software available.

J.W.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	55%
Play it Again	40%
Value for Money	40%
Star Quality ★ ★	

CYBER RATS

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.95
Silversoft,
20 Orange Street,
London WC2H 7ED.

In this derivative of our old friend Centipede, deadly rats advance on you from the top of the screen. If they touch you, you lose a life (you have three to start with).

The rats appear at the top right and top left of the screen, and travel across until they reach the other side or encounter a tuft of grass. At this point they jump down to the row below.

You can move left, right, up and down, and fire at the rats as they advance (you use the 0 key for this, a point the instructions fail to mention). If you manage to clear them all, a larger swarm appears . . .

Every now and then an easily avoidable purple killer rat drops down to add variety.

No problems loading, and you can play either from the keyboard or from an AGF or Kempston joystick. One or two players can take part, each player's turn ending when he/she loses a life. The highest score is recorded, but not the player's name.

P.F.

Graphics	50%
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	50%
Play it Again	40%
Value for Money	50%
Star Quality ★ ★	

D

DAMPER/ GLOOPER

ZX81 (16K)
£4.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton S01 1LL.

I didn't find the blurb for this program very helpful in understanding the game, in spite of the writer's vivid imagination; but the game itself was better.

Damper puts you in a city on an alien planet; mysterious black blobs are attaching themselves to the power cables, moving around the grid and sapping the city's power supply. Your job is to move a grid runner around the wires, damping down the power while avoiding the aliens.

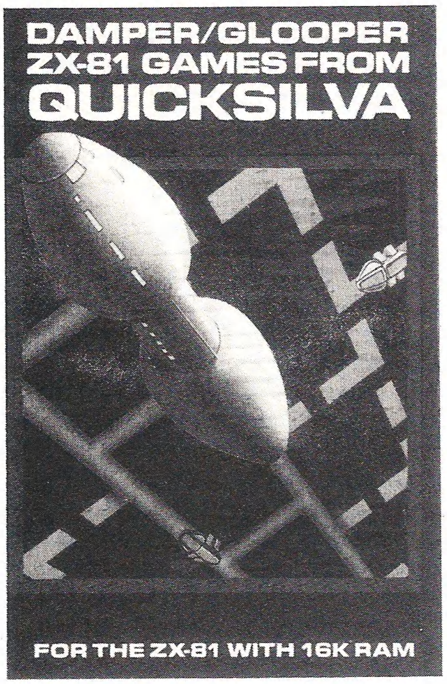
The game loaded and ran with no problems; there are optional instructions displayed at the start of the program.

There are five 'dampers' for you to avoid; they move in an irregular wave up and down the grid, and if your timing is not precise it is very easy to get caught!

The graphics are clear and the controls are quick without being over-sensitive. You have three 'lives' (plus bonus if you become good at the game) and the speed increases as the game progresses.

Scores are displayed, and at the end of each game there is a 'hall of fame' display; the players with the highest scores may enter their names. There is also a facility for saving the game.

I found Dampers a straightforward game, without frills, but with enough difficulty involved to prevent the player from becoming bored — everytime I thought I had the knack of avoiding the 'dampers' I managed to get caught.



Glooper is a relative of Quicksilva's Munchees, fun to play and competently produced.

C.C-R

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	85%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

DEATH SATELLITE

ATOM (12K)
£6.00
A & F Software,
10 Wilpshire Avenue,
Longsight,
Manchester.

Death Satellite is an adventure game for those who love to be driven mad by frustration. As far as I have been able to tell, one would need a copy of the listing to solve the elusive mystery.

Apparently your Time Machine, having run out of fuel, has deposited you upon a deserted satellite full of terrible ways to die. In a bid to secure more fuel for your machine you must explore the surrounding rooms and decipher their secrets. You are given only the barest of help and it is up to your quickness of mind to discover the command words to assist you in your quest.

For further confusion the program logic seems to break down in one or two places. For example, only very occasionally I might add, after reversing your direction of travel you do not end up at your previous travel point. A nasty thought has just occurred to me — perhaps it is a built in device to drive you mad. Also, again very occasionally, the game restarts automatically, leaving you staring in slight confusion at the command to 'Type RUN for new game'.

All in all an interesting game that should appeal to all those who love text only Adventures.

P.S.

Graphics	58%
Ease of Use	79%
Instructions	71%
Play it Again	49%
Value for Money	85%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

DEFEND

TRS-80 I & III
£14.95 (tape), £8.40 (disc)
Molimerx,
1 Buckhurst Road,
Town Hall Square,
Bexhill-On-Sea,
East Sussex.

Transferring popular arcade video games to computer often results in a mediocre quality game.

Defend is no exception to this rule. This attempt to convert the arcade game Scramble on the TRS-80 is a fair attempt but does not do justice to the original game. It lacks the high graphics quality and the colour provided on arcade games.

But the concept of the game is the same. You man the controls of a space ship flying on a horizontal path above an undulating landscape lined with rockets and alien blasters. Actually in this game it is the landscape and objects which move past the ship, not vice versa.

The four arrow keys give you control over the movement of your ship in eight directions, a diagonal movement also being possible. You have to shoot down as many enemy ships as possible. These you find flying straight at you belting out constant fire.

Your space ship is equipped with a variety of weapons, a laser gun which you activate by pressing the Space bar. In addition you can use smart bombs by pressing the @ key. Be selective using these as you only have three to start with.

Smart bombs are very useful as they make all the alien ships on the screen impotent. If you reach the 10,000 mark you automatically receive an extra smart bomb. Don't collide with them or you will lose one of your five ship lives.

Advance warning of the forthcoming dangers is given to you at the top of the screen.

Three levels of play affect such things as speed, number of aliens, and number of missiles on the screen and the game incorporates sound effects. Defend is suitably different to warrant consideration and I found it taxing to play the highest level but boredom set in quickly.

D.B.

Graphics	61%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	25%
Value for Money	30%
Star Quality ★ ★	

3D DEFENDER

ZX81 (16K)
£4.95
New Generation Software,
Freepost,
Bath BA2 4TD.

When this game arrived I must say I was a little sceptical. To be honest, I felt that even two dimensional games were a little lacking on the ZX81.

Despite its title the game owes very little to the original arcade game. You are the pilot of a space fighter defending your planet against marauding alien spaceships. So the plot is not original, but it is the speed and the use of the ZX81's limited graphics that really make this game stand out.

As the game commences you are shown a view out of a cockpit window as you fly over the surface of your planet. You control your ship by using four groups of keys to represent up, down, left and right. The use of groups of keys as opposed to just four keys means that you get greater choice over the positioning of your hands, making controlling the ship much more comfortable, once you get used to this method. But take heed, it is difficult.

As you home in the alien grows larger in your sights and you have to dodge and weave to avoid its plasma bolts whilst trying to line it up so you can annihilate it.

The graphics, for the facilities available are impressive, even to the point of showing the ground racing towards you as you skim the surface of the planet. This tape is a must for anyone with a ZX81 who enjoys action games. I can't wait for the ZX Spectrum version.

C.P.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

DERBY DAY

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£5.95
Computer Rentals,
140 Whitechapel Road,
London E1.

It's Saturday at the races. Place your bets with Honest Clive the bookie and the race begins. This race simulation game from Computer Rentals should prove a cheap and harmless way to quell the family's gambling instincts.

Up to five players can bet at one time, and there are seven races to a meeting. Three levels of play are offered, from "fun" to "dead serious punter" — the highest level lets you enter horses' names and odds of your own choice.

At the start of the game, you also choose whether to bet for points or pence — if you choose pence, one of the players becomes Honest Clive's partner and runs their own book.
For the race itself, a machine code routine scrolls the screen from left to right as the horses thud along the track. As they near the finish, the action changes to slow motion. If the occasion arises, a photo finish result is given.

If you win your bet, your total is increased according to the odds on the winning horse, and if your horse comes in second, you get one quarter of the odds.

I.O.

Graphics	85%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

DERBY DAY
For the SINCLAIR 48K S

DICTATOR

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£4.95
dk'tronics,
23 Sussex Road,
Gorleston,
Great Yarmouth.

One for the would-be world rulers. Run a fictitious country entirely as you wish, but watch out for assassination attempts, army coups and revolting peasants (in both senses!).

A text-only format allows a mass of information to be thrown on to the screen and provides you with plenty of decisions to make — and to get wrong.

Your popularity rating with each sector of the population is displayed and if it falls too low in one year, the farms will yield you just so much food — but if you get to feel bogged down you can always raise an army and go beat up your neighbours!

Great fun in its own way and will probably teach you a thing or two about yourself that you didn't really want to know! About the only sure way to win is to kill off any opposition and run your spending close to the limits. Build up the secret police, but watch out for the army if it gets **too** strong!

The instructions need to be better explained, and longer. Supplying an unlabelled cassette may be cheaper, but it is a recipe for disgruntled customers, should tapes get mixed up at home.

R.H.

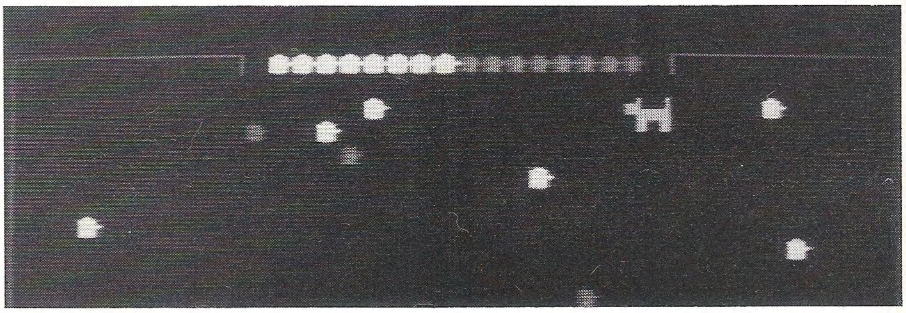
Graphics	N/A
Ease of Use	65%
Instructions	50%
Play it Again	40%
Value for Money	50%
Star Quality ★ ★	

DOG DAZE

Atari (8K)
£14.00
Atari Program Exchange,
Contact:
Atari International (UK) Ltd,
Atari House,
Railway Terrace,
Slough,
Berkshire SL2 5BZ.

Give a dog a bone and it should keep him happy but this species always tries to get rid of them.

Dog Daze makes a welcome change from man's worst enemy the space invader and requires just as much concentration and digital dexterity to win.



This two player Atari game is completely new in concept and theme. Both players control differently coloured dogs which are moved around the screen in any direction using joysticks.

It looks deceptively simple at first when just two dogs appear on the screen followed by a randomly placed fire hydrant. The object of the game is for each dog to mark his territory, in this case the fire hydrants, so that each one establishes his ground.

There are two ways of doing this, firstly to run your dog up next to the hydrant which magically makes it change colour. Secondly, try a more devious method and fire your dog's bone at the hydrant. Here's where your aim needs to be accurate as you line your dog up with the hydrant, and press the fire button to send the bone sailing smoothly towards the target.

If your aim is true the hydrant changes to your colour and you gain a point, but if you miss, your bone will either stick to the opponent's hydrant or to the side of the screen and you will have to collect it to use it again.

As soon as you have captured one hydrant then another will appear randomly.

The scoring is displayed on a row of 16 hydrants on the top of the screen. These gradually change colour depending on how many hydrants each player has captured, the winner being the first person to change all these to their own colour. You can set variations on the game, such as a time limit or filling the screen with hydrants before you start, if you want to increase the difficulty.

The graphics and sound are both used very well on this game and it should appeal to anybody old enough to hold a joystick.

C.P.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	30%
Play it Again	62%
Value for Money	51%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

DONKEY KING

Dragon 32
£8.00
Microdeal,
41 Truro Road,
St. Austell,
Cornwall.

This proved to be an excellent arcade action game for the Dragon 32 plus joysticks, written in machine code and well presented. Loading posed no problems, and as a hint of the good things to come, a colourful banner appeared on the screen while loading was in progress.

Your task is to shin up ramps and ladders in a gallant attempt to rescue a maiden in distress who — shades of King Kong — has been captured by a gorilla.

On the way you must ward off flames and other obstacles hurled by the marauding ape. There are four different screens with barrels, pins, jacks and conveyors which you have to struggle through before you finally reach and rescue the damsel.

One or two people can play. To help out learners you have the choice of playing at normal or slower speed. Another thoughtful touch is an option to play practice games which offer you 12 lives instead of the normal four.

I found myself agreeing wholeheartedly with the cassette inlay card, which described the game as "barrels of fun". I was immensely impressed with its excellent use of the Dragon 32's colour hi-res graphics and sound facilities.

C.D.

Graphics	100%
Ease of Use	90%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	95%
Value for Money	95%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	

DO NOT PASS GO

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£5.50
Work Force,
140 Wilsden Avenue,
Luton,
Bedfordshire.

In this computer version of the most famous board game in the world, the players no longer have to handle any money, or throw the die. These menial tasks are all done by the computer, leaving the kitchen table and the players' hands free for more important things, like drinking beer and eating sandwiches.

WORK FORCE
UP TO 6 PLAYERS
HOTEL
DO NOT PASS
GO
ELECTRIC Co
JAIL
STATION
WF

Leave room on the table for a small note pad though, to keep track of what you have bought. Although the program will give you a listing when asked for, it will not give you one when you most need it such as when buying houses etc.

Almost everyone must know how to play this game, so all you have to do is respond to the computer prompts. You should have no problems when loading, and there is a SAVE option which has certainly got the edge on the original game. Remember having to pack it up just when you were winning?

The layout of the board is on screen all the time you are playing. One small criticism of the graphics — some of the displays are difficult to read because of an ill-chosen combination of paper and ink. Other than that, it is as playable as the board version and still a very good family game for wet Sunday afternoons (at least, that's when we play it).

B.B.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	90%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

DUNGEONS OF INTRIGUE

Oric-1 (48K)
£5.50
ASL Software,
66 Fford Llywelyn,
Little Acton,
Wrexham,
Clwyd.

Dungeons Of Intrigue is, as the name suggests, yet another reworking of the Dungeons and Dragons concept. As such you would expect a game that both entertains and offers some original ideas. Unfortunately this game does neither.

You start off by choosing and equipping your character in the usual manner. The scenario is similarly predictable: you must find a long-lost Magical Rod which is somewhere in a monster-ridden dungeon.

The display consists of a 5 by 5 block showing you and your immediate surroundings. All commands are abbreviated to a single letter, which certainly speeds up the game, but the 12 options offered are not enough to make things interesting.

On the presentation side the game is very sloppy. Much of the text is badly spaced, and some messages vanish or scroll off the screen before you can read them.

All in all, this game appears to have been very hastily written, with almost no attention to detail.

G.P.

Graphics	10%
Ease of Use	26%
Instructions	20%
Play it Again	21%
Value for Money	20%
Star Quality ★	

Photograph courtesy of Scotia-Barber.

E

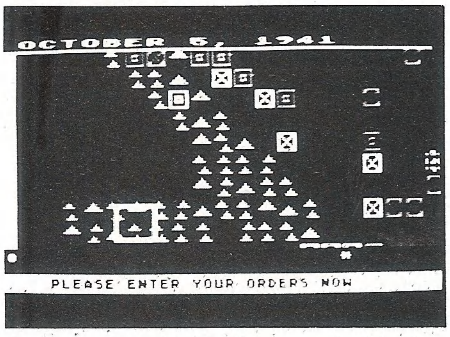
EASTERN FRONT

Atari (16K)
£22.50
Atari Program Exchange,
Contact:
Atari International (UK) Ltd,
Atari House,
Railway Terrace,
Slough,
Berkshire SL2 5BZ.

Eastern Front successfully overcomes the usual lack of quality graphical representation and painful screen size restrictions that most computer wargames suffer from.

Atari computer graphics facilities transform it into a taxing and attractive strategy game.

The screen display is produced with multi-coloured hi-resolution graphics so that the board covers roughly 10 screen areas over which you can move the cursor while scrolling the screen in any direction.



OCTOBER 5, 1941

PLEASE ENTER YOUR ORDERS NOW

My two criticisms of the game are the lack of information given when the computer carries out the moves and the inability to save the game on tape.

This game should appeal to dedicated wargamers because of its intricacy and depth, but it would be a useful extension to your machine's game capabilities even if wargames have never appealed to you before.

C.P.

Graphics	85%
Ease of Use	41%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	

EDUCATIONAL-1B

BBC Micro (32K)
£8.55
Golem Ltd,
77 Qualitas,
Bracknell,
Berkshire RG12 4OG.

Seven different games, designed to help children aged five to nine with maths, memory, spelling and telling the time.

Math1 deals with addition and subtraction, Math2 with multiplication and division — in both, the players must race to answer the questions and reach the finishing flag before a time limit runs out. A good idea, but both games fail to show the right answer if the player answers incorrectly — a serious omission in an education program.

Cubecount asks the players to count the number of cubes displayed, and Shapes asks them to name various shapes. Both have good graphics and are fun to play.

Memory tests ability to recall colours and shapes displayed in a limited time period, and Spell and Clock, help with spelling and telling the time.

An excellent mixture of games, offering various levels of difficulty and speed of response. Entertaining enough to keep young children's attention and, on the whole, well-designed enough to help them learn while enjoying themselves.

P.C.

Graphics	85%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	75%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

EDUCATIONAL-2B

BBC Micro (32K)
£8.55
Golem Ltd,
77 Qualitas,
Bracknell,
Berkshire RG12 4OG.

Aimed at slightly older children aged seven to 12. Educational — 2B simply contains harder versions of most of the games in Educational — 1B.

Math1, Math2, Memory, Cubecount and Spell reappear in upgraded form, but Shapes and Clock are replaced by Area, a game in which the player has to work out the area of a rectangle or square. Area is well designed, but a little too slow in supplying the answers to problems.

The package contains one less game than Educational — 1B, so not quite such good value.

P.C.

Graphics	85%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	50%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

EDUQUIZ 1

Dragon 32
£8.65
Gem Software,
Unit D,
The Maltings
Station Road,
Sawbridgeworth,
Hertfordshire.

Presented in the style of the TV programme *Winner Takes All,* this program contains three quizzes, Geography, Inventors and Inventions, and Kings and Queens.

You are presented with the question and a choice of answers, each of which is given an odds value. Type in the number of your guess and how much you wish to bet, the correct answer is given and the money is adjusted appropriately.

I do not usually like quiz programs, but because of the presentation and the clever way in which questions are asked by juggling the phrases, I found this game quite addictive. You learn by your mistakes. There are a lot of combinations of facts and it would take a long time before all the possibilities were exhausted.

Text only, but with an excellent title page and good instructions presented on screen. Eduquiz 1 is easy to use, fun and educational. Written in BASIC, it loaded first time and seems adequately idiot-proofed.

If this program had included a 'high score hall of fame' feature it would have been perfect. — and how did they get it to print black text on **orange**?

R.E.

Graphics	N/A
Ease of Use	65%
Instructions	85%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

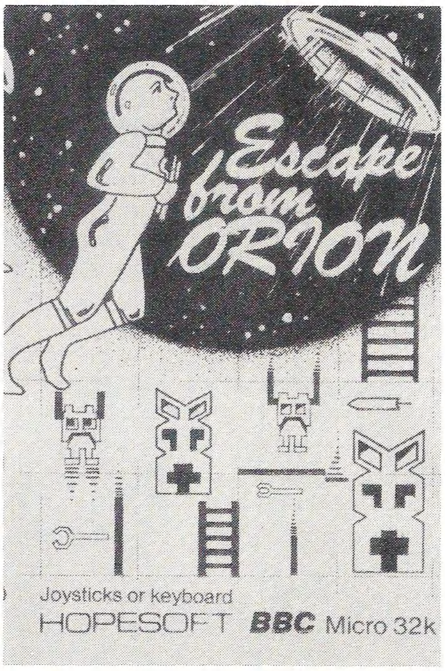
ESCAPE FROM ORION

BBC Micro (32K)
£6.95
Hopesoft,
Hope Cottage,
Winterbourne,
Newbury,
Berkshire.

This 'Kong' variant has four entertaining screens with good graphics. The astronaut seeking spare parts for his ship 'yomps' his way up ladders and over gaps to find them.

The control screen allows you to select which hazards to face, out of fast missiles, lifts, conveyor belts and electric doors. You can also select which level to start on. It is the first program I have seen to change the colours for those with black and white sets.

The difficulty levels are very gradual but getting beyond level 5 calls for real skill. The control keys are well placed and the joystick option offers a good responsive game, unlike some so-called joystick software. The only real faults are the instructions, which involve a great deal of trial and error, and the slightly strange choice of colours, Nevertheless the addictive value is high.



Such a pity our 'yomping' hero doesn't sport a para's beret.

D.C.

Graphics	81%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	56%
Play it Again	71%
Value for Money	68%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

ESCAPE FROM PULSAR 7

TRS-80 I & III
£10.06 (tape); £13.51 (disc)
Molimerx,
1 Buckhurst Road,
Town Hall Square,
Bexhill-On-Sea,
East Sussex.

Escape from Pulsar 7 smacks of the laudable film *'Alien'* which sent waves of suspense through hundreds of people.

You are the sole survivior of the crew of the space freighter Pulsar 7, the rest of the crew having been killed by a now savage creature that was being transported to your home planet as a specimen for the galatic zoo. Its transformation from a harmless animal into a wild beast was the result of over-exposure to a dangerous ore.

The object of the game is to survive. You, the captain, have to avoid the deadly, vicious creature and successfully flee the frail freighter.

All the standard adventure word commands are used in the game including SAVE, TAKE, EXAMINE, DROP, and GO. On-screen display and format follow usual adventure games so that the top of the screen describes your location, and tells you what objects are in the area. The bottom of the screen is where your keyed-in instructions and the program's responses has displayed.

Molimerx has labelled its adventure series with the 'mysterious' tag presumably because that is what they are to many adventurers. All are written in machine code which is a programming language that speeds up the program's action. A full 16K of RAM (Random Access Memory) is utilised and in this game lower case is fully supported. A couple of notable omissions from Escape From Pulsar 7 are graphics and sound which detract from the program.

D.B.

Graphics	61%
Ease of Use	86%
Instructions	61%
Play it Again	31%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

EVEREST ASCENT

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£6.50
Richard Shepherd Software,
Freepost,
Maidenhead,
Berkshire SL6 5BX.

Combining aspects of adventure and resource mangement, this program requires the player to control 10 Sherpas with varying cost/performance merit, 10 items of equipment, and cash flowing in at an unpredictable rate.

The concept is good, but more attention might have been paid to the player's convenience. It was irritating to be offered a menu of options, only to find that the option I chose was invalid in the current circumstances. For example, if there are stars in the sky, indicating night time, the only valid option is to camp.

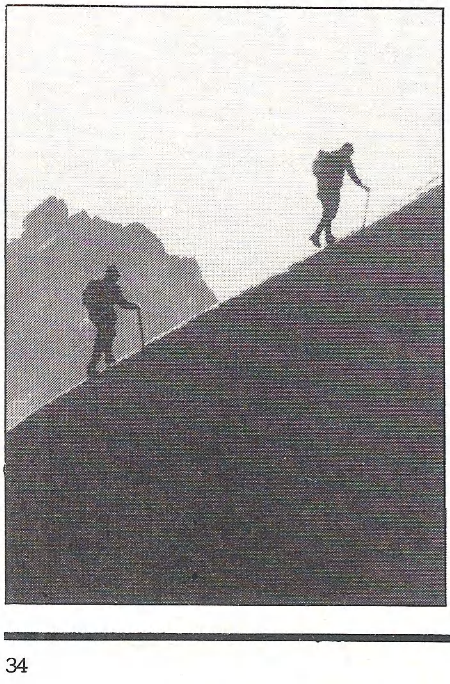
Limited availability of key information, such as the remaining cash in hand, may be deliberate policy, but it results in the need to make copious notes. You can get at the information by asking for a 'Position' report (which means 'status'), but it is not available while consequent changes are being made.

No serious bugs were found, bar the appearance of equipment in the list of Sherpas, which may be have been due to user error, but the program is not uncrashable. A 'quit' option would have been welcome where disaster was inevitable.

Nevertheless, an interesting, if frustrating, game. With practice the disadvantages can be minimised and reasonable progress can be made.

D.T.

Graphics	75%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	



Photograph courtesy of The Ladd Company.

THE EXTERMINATOR

Colour Genie
£7.95
Algray,
Algray House,
33 Bradbury Street,
Barnsley,
South Yorkshire S70 6AQ.

Oh dear, what is this? Based on a fairly weak idea, Exterminator is one of those 'zap-zap' game, apparently written by someone with little imagination in about 10 minutes.

The game is split into two phases. In the first phase your spaceship whizzes about the screen at breakneck speed, as you vainly try to zap little flapping aliens. This in itself is a fairly impossible task as the aliens have guided missiles on their side which fly at you leaving you little chance to get out of the way.

The second phase, however, is a slight improvement. Your craft is now in a safe area at the top of the screen where the alien eggs can be destroyed. Your ship must fly out of this safe area, dodge the mines and guardians, and return to the safe area to destroy the eggs.

The controls are very difficult to master and the ship really goes too fast to be controlled successfully. In order to fire, the Space bar must be pressed together with the appropriate direction key, which is very difficult indeed. This makes the game awkward to play, and it will soon lose its appeal, if you feel it ever had any.

Really a bit of a disappointment when compared with some of Algray's other offerings. The game is vastly overpriced and is the sort of game that one might like to tap in from a listing in a magazine on a wet winter's night.

I.O.

Graphics	40%
Ease of Use	10%
Instructions	20%
Play it Again	30%
Value for Money	20%
Star Quality ★	

F

FAMILY PROGRAMS

Dragon 32
£6.95
Shards Software,
10 Park Vale Court,
Vine Way,
Brentwood,
Essex CM14 4UR.

A compilation of eight programs designed to cater for a wide range of interests, but suffering a little from the 'jack of all trades, master of none' syndrome. Still, bearing in mind that the range is worthwhile in terms of what can be obtained, I shall deal with some of the highlights.

Tunes is a race against the clock to recognise as many songs as you can. The five song categories and over 100 tunes include nursery rhymes for the little 'uns and Golden Oldies for those with rather longer memories.

FAMILY PROGRAMS
for the DRAGON 32
2+2=?
Shards
SOFTWARE

Finance offers a simple menu to either calculate mortgage repayment or savings. It could be used to work out any form of loan, though — useful for calculating the annual rate on the credit card payments for your home computer?

Quiz allows either one or two players to answer questions on a variety of randomly-chosen topics against the clock. The two-player version is unnecessarily complicated by the use of joysticks to pick out the letters of the answer, but the first version is an enjoyable competition for all the family. Both this game and Tunes require typing in PCLEAR prior to loading.

Also included is a maths quiz, a version of Simon, a tank battle, a few Oddjob items and a game where you thread a simulated wire through a simulated ring.

All in all, a nice collection which succeeded in interesting all members of the family, neatly packaged with loading details. A good idea, in my view, to reinforce Dragon's own advertising stressing the family aspects of computing. Could this be the end of the lonesome vigil beside the green screen?

M.P.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	95%
Play it Again	85%
Value for Money	85%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

FIRIEN WOOD

BBC Micro (32K)
£7.50
MP Software & Services,
165 Spital Road,
Bromborough,
Merseyside L62 2AE.

You either love adventure games or you loathe them. I love them, and this one is a beauty which should appeal to novice and experienced adventurer alike. Your task is to track down the Golden Bird of Paradise which has been captured by an evil wizard lurking somewhere in the heart of Firien Wood.

The game starts by giving a brief description of your surroundings, and then waits for you to type in instructions to determine what it should do next. Instructions are either a direction (eg "NORTH", meaning go north) or a verb followed by a noun (eg ENTER BUILDING). If you are lucky the computer responds with some new information; if you are unlucky it responds with "I don't understand" and you must try something else.

Firien Wood features the usual gamut of fiendish puzzles, magic passwords, knife-throwing goblins, quirky humour, and all manner of treasures and monsters to be dealt with en route. You can also save a game to tape, ready to be resumed at a later date.

The game is written entirely in machine code which make for some very fast responses (and also stops you from cheating!) but means the program has to be *RUN rather than CHAINed into the micro.

Although there are no graphics in the game (what do you expect in 32K?) good use is made of colour — non-committal messages usually appear in purple, warning messages in red (severe warning messages in flashing red), useful information in green, magic messages in yellow etc.

It's impossible to fully check an adventure program in a few days, but an initial examination reveals a large number of locations and puzzles to keep an adventurer happy for weeks.

Nice one MP Software!

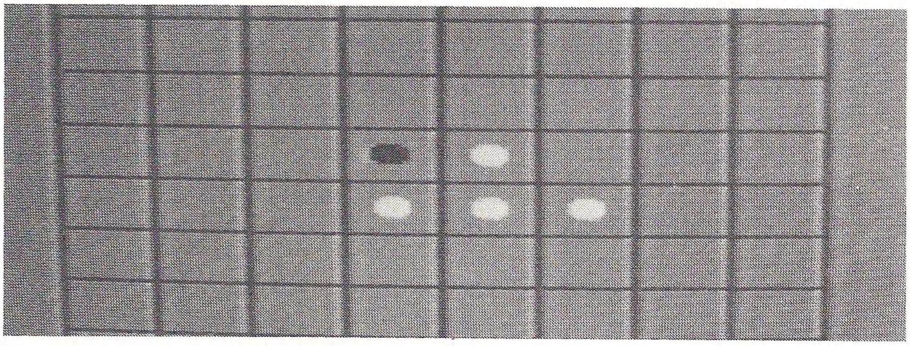
I.D.S.

Graphics	N/A
Ease of Use	10%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

FLIPDISC

VIC-20 (+8K)
£5.95
The Software House,
46 Oxford Street,
London.

Also known as Flipper and Othello, this is a board game played on your VIC-20. Though it looks just like draughts or checkers, it's an electronic version brought right up to date.



You have a board of eight squares marked A — H and 1 — 8. On these squares are circular black or white discs. Your object is to fill the board with your own colour, playing against the computer. To achieve this result you must convert your opponents discs to your own colour by careful, strategic play.

To make this conversion the computer first asks you whether you want it to work at its fastest speed. If you don't, you are told snappily that you are taking the easy way out. Then you tell the computer, the position in terms of the appropriate box, to place a disc alongside your opponent's. The rest of the discs in the same line will be converted to your colour.

N.A.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	85%
Instructions	56%
Play it Again	72%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

NEW! ZX SPECTRUM TAPE NOW READY!
NEW! EXPANDED DISC VERSIONS FOR APPLE, PET AND SHARP!

SOFTWARE FROM COMPUTING TODAY

THE V LLEY

ASP LTD 1982

What are you... Barbarian or Wizard?

Choose your character type carefully... Barbarians recover quickly but their magic doesn't come easily. A Wizard? Slow on the draw and slow to mature... but live long enough and grow wise enough and your lightning bolts are almost unstoppable...

The Valley is a real-time game of adventure and survival. You may choose one of five character types to be your personal 'extension of self' to battle and pit your wits against a number of monsters. Find treasure, fight a Thunder-Lizard in the arid deserts of the Valley, conquer a Kraken in the lakes surrounding the dread Temples of Y'Nagioth or cauterise a Wraith in the Black Tower. In fact live out the fantasies you've only dared dream about. BUT BEWARE... more die than live to tell the tale!
You've read the program (Computing Today — April '82) ... Now buy the tape. Tape versions (£11.45 each inc P&P and VAT) available for: ZX Spectrum (48K), Atari 400 and 800 (32K) BBC Model A and B, Sharp MZ-80A, and VIC-20 (with 16K RAM pack). Disc version (£13.95 each inc P&P and VAT) available for: Apple II (DOS 3.3), Sharp MZ-80A and PET 8032 (8050 drives).

A complete reprint of the Valley article is also available for those wishing to do their own conversions for £1.95.

Fill in the coupon and return it to CT Software, ASP Ltd., 145 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0EE and become one of the many to play... The Valley...

Please send me the following versions of The Valley program:

Tape....................@£11.45 all inclusive.
Disc....................@£13.95 all inclusive.
Article reprint..............@£1.95 all inclusive.

I enclose cheque/PO for £..... (payable to ASP Ltd).
OR Debit my Access/Barclaycard (delete as necessary)

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Please use BLOCK CAPITALS

PS Autumn '83

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss)...

Address...

.... Postcode ....

Signature.. Date.......................................

Please allow 21 days for delivery

ASP SOFTWARE

'NOW WIN THE POOLS'

THIS IS MEANT FOR **YOU** – ESPECIALLY IF YOU USE A SINCLAIR ZX81 or SINCLAIR SPECTRUM COMPUTER, or even ANY COMPUTER.

HAVE YOU EVER HAD THAT DREAM OR EVER WISHED THAT YOU HAD "WON ON THE POOLS" – AT LAST YOU CAN TURN IT INTO REALITY.

THERE **IS** A SECRET OF "HOW TO WIN ON THE FOOTBALL POOLS" – **IT CAN BE DONE.** I DISCOVERED THE SECRET A LONG TIME AGO – NOW, **FOR THE FIRST TIME** I'M PREPARED TO SHARE IT WITH YOU.

HOW DOES THIS INTEREST YOU – I HAVE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE BY WAY OF POOLS WINNINGS DIVIDEND SLIPS/ CANCELLED CHEQUES, etc, SHOWING MY PRESENT WINS ON THE POOLS AS FOLLOWS:–

First Dividends	**Second Dividends**	**Third Dividends**	**Fourth Dividends**	**Fifth Dividends**	**Sixth Dividends**
765	1,818	2,942	1,952	631	93

A GRAND TOTAL OF 8,201 (EIGHT THOUSAND, TWO HUNDRED AND ONE DIVIDENDS – so far).

I HOLD THE UNCHALLENGED WORLD'S RECORD FOR POOLS WINS

I AM MAKING THIS VERY SPECIAL, REDUCED PRICE OFFER TO READERS OF PERSONAL SOFTWARE FOR A LIMITED PERIOD ONLY

Do not let anyone tell you that it is impossible to "WIN ON THE POOLS" – since I perfected my method, **I HAVE WON REGULARLY** for over **TWENTY-FIVE YEARS** – proof that it is no 'flash-in-the-pan'.

I have CHALLENGED THE WORLD with my record of wins and with all the evidence that I possess – NO ONE has ever been able to accept the Challenge – I KNOW NO ONE EVER WILL.

MY SECRET IS NOW PLACED ONTO COMPUTER CASSETTE FOR YOU.

THE METHOD IS THE GREATEST TREBLE CHANCE WINNER IN THE HISTORY OF FOOTBALL POOLS – IT WILL LAST FOREVER – BOTH FOR ENGLISH AND AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL POOLS, WITH EQUAL SUCCESS.

I now intend to give a limited number of people the opportunity of making use of my method – perfected over 25 years and proving itself on **EVERY ONE OF THOSE TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.**

You will have noted details of my personal achievements so far, as given to you above.

A GRAND TOTAL of 8,201, yes 8,201 POOLS DIVIDENDS, including **765 FIRST DIVIDENDS.**

My Pools Winnings Dividend slips now number so many, that they fill a very large suitcase and will stand as my evidence of all claims in **ANY COURT OF LAW IN THE WHOLE WORLD.**

Taking just the past 25 years into consideration, I have won ON AVERAGE over 328, (THREE HUNDRED AND TWENTY–EIGHT) Pools Dividends **EVERY YEAR** – or – AN AVERAGE of over **SIX DIVIDENDS EVERY WEEK** for **TWENTY—FIVE YEARS.**

You have my absolute Guarantee of the complete authenticity of every claim, cheque, document, letter, etc, contained herein.

I do have losing weeks, but ON AVERAGE my winnings show over SIX DIVIDENDS **EVERY WEEK** for the past 25 years.

I know that you are now utterly flabbergasted, it always happens to everyone with whom I come into contact. Please just sit back and **imagine** for a moment my **FIRST DIVIDEND** wins alone – they now number 765 (seven hundred and sixty-five) and will probably be even more by the time this advertisement appears in print.

I AM NUMBER ONE IN THE WORLD AND NO ONE DISPUTES IT.

For as long as I continue to enter the Football Pools my wins will continue. I have already said, they apply, with equal success to both English and Australian Football Seasons.

I intend to release a STRICTLY LIMITED NUMBER of copies of my cassette, (either for Sinclair ZX81 or Sinclair Spectrum) – DO NOT DELAY AND FIND YOU ARE TOO LATE, in which case I would have to refund your money.

I am so confident of **YOUR** success that if do **not** win at least THREE FIRST TREBLE CHANCE DIVIDENDS in the first 20 weeks of entering, I will completely cancel the balance of the purchase price and you do not have to pay me another penny, at any time, no matter how vast your winnings.

I only wish that space would allow me to give you photographs of my winnings slips, cancelled cheques, etc, but it is of course impossible – they now number 8,201 dividends. I have however given JUST A FEW EXTRACTS from ORIGINAL LETTERS I hold from my small Clientele.

I am the Inventor and Sole Proprietor of my method, Registered as EUREKA – ('I have found it'). I am known as The Professor in Pools Circles – I am of the Highest Rank in Forecasting – this is beyond dispute. I am marketing a limited number of Computer Cassettes, under my Registered Company – FOOTBALL ENTERPRISES.

My initial charge for a copy was £75, but for this SPECIAL REDUCED PRICE OFFER I will send you a copy, (for ZX81 or Spectrum) for £20, (twenty pounds) ONLY, plus your Promise to pay me the balance of £55 – **ONLY** IF YOU WIN AT LEAST THREE FIRST TREBLE CHANCE DIVIDENDS IN YOUR FIRST 20 WEEKS OF ENTERING – otherwise you owe me NOTHING FURTHER.

This is surely proof absolute of my supreme and utter confidence in my own abilities and in the capabilities of my discovery. I could easily CHARGE £2,000 per cassette on the evidence I possess, but that would not be fair to everyone, which is what I want to do.

My method is WORLD COPYWRIGHT, any infringement and immediate proceedings will be taken, without prior warning. It is truly ingenious and has stood the test of time.

My cassette is simplicity itself to operate and you'll be given FULL DETAILS for weekly calculating. Your entry need not involve you in any large weekly stakes, you can enter for as little as 25p, if you wish.

I charge NO COMMISSION on any of your wins – no matter how BIG they may be.

I realised a long time ago, that it was no good sitting down and **dreaming** about winning the pools, so I burnt the candle at both ends, working late into the night, occasionally RIGHT THROUGH THE NIGHT, I **KNEW** there was a way, eventually it all paid off and has been doing so ever since.

I am unable to vary my offer to anyone, so please do not request it, as I shall very easily dispose of the cassettes I have prepared and am making available.

IMMEDIATELY I perfected my method I commenced winning right away, (first with just a little £163, the first week I used it), I HAVE NEVER LOOKED BACK SINCE, amongst all those dividends was one for over **EIGHT THOUSAND POUNDS** for just **one eighth of a penny stake.**

I will release a copy on cassette, to you, on receipt of the completed order form and your Signature thereon, confirming you will treat it in the STRICTEST CONFIDENCE between us and retain it for your **OWN USE ONLY.**

PLEASE NOTE:
If you happen to be the proud owner of a Computer, **other than** a Sinclair ZX81 or Sinclair Spectrum, you can still purchase a copy of my method, for the same price and program it YOURSELF on to YOUR OWN COMPUTER.

Don't take my word for it, read what people write about me and my method:–

I won on Zetters last weekend. It was not a big sum, but all the same it was a very nice surprise for me. J.C., Lancs.

I appreciate the straightforward method you adopt, which is such a contrast to the rubbish of misrepresentation which is so common in the Betting World, by unscupulous and self-opinionated charlatans. C.H., Devon

Winnings cheque received today, sincere thanks. D.N., Devon

I congratulate you on your achievement. R.R., Wales

I should like to thank you for a most exciting season and look forward to hearing from you again. J.C., Hants.

I would like to acknowledge cheque and say how much I appreciate your integrity. J.M., Scotland

Many thanks for your system, it is all you say and more. J.C., Lancs.

Your wonderful system won me £3,527. I intend to visit London soon and will be able to come and see you personally. (Overseas Client). P.M., Kampala.

Many thanks for trying so hard to please us all, your brother should be thanked also. One of our daughters, WHOSE HUSBAND YOU HELPED ENORMOUSLY, has just phoned, the four of them have just spent a lovely holiday in Spain. K.R.,Isle of Man.

I sent in my FIRST entry last week and won 2nd and 3rd dividends, as you will see from the enclosed certificate. One more and I would have collected over £400 for FIRST dividend. Once I've won a fair amount I shall be staking from winnings and at 2p per line, A FIRST DIVIDEND last week at this would have been over £3,000. C.A., Yorks.

I am very interested indeed and enclose £20 herewith. I agree to pay you the balance of £55 **ONLY** if I win at least THREE FIRST TREBLE CHANCE DIVIDENDS in my first 20 weeks of entering – otherwise I owe you NOTHING FURTHER at any time – no matter how much money I win. My Signature below is my Undertaking to retain complete and absolute confidence about the method.

Name..

Address..

....

....

Signature HCW4

The Managing Director,
Football Enterprises,
'Anvon',
9 New Road,
Haverfordwest, Pembs.

Please tick if cassette is for:
Sinclair ZX81 (16K) ☐
Sinclair Spectrum (48K) ☐
Any other Computer ☐

FOOTBALL MANAGER

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£7.95
Addictive Games,
PO Box 278,
Conniburrow,
Milton Keynes MK14 7NE.

Versions of Addictive Games' Football Manager have been produced for all the popular home micros, and it is now available for the 48K ZX Spectrum.

You are given managership of any one of the 64 teams in the league (you can even change any team's name to your own favourite if it is not one of those shown). Whichever team you choose, it begins in division four at the start of a new season. Your aim is to achieve promotion and a good run in the FA Cup — who knows, perhaps even win it!

The league is split into four divisions of 16 teams so each season involves 15 league matches plus up to eight rounds of the FA Cup. You start off with a squad of 12 players and £100,000 to spend in the transfer market if you wish. If you're the sort of manager who likes to try and buy your way to the top, then you can also obtain a bank loan up to a certain credit limit based on your division, at a 1% per week rate of interest.

The players, whose names are those of current league footballers, have three attributes. First, they are either defence, midfield or attacking players. Second, they have a skill rating of 1 to 5, on which depends their value. Third, they have an energy rating of 1 to 20, which goes down by one for each game played, and up by 10 for each game rested. When you come to play a match you are given the 'team attributes' for yourself and the opposition, and it is then up to you to juggle with the composition of your team if you need to. The five team attributes are the average energy rating, morale (which goes up and down depending on results), and then the total skill rating in defence, midfield and attack.

With the team selected, you can sit back and watch the match highlights in moving 3-D graphics. This is what makes the game more than just a sophisticated 'Kingdoms'. Seven or eight goalmouth incidents are shown, with players running around, moving into position, and then shooting at goal. Having to helplessly watch the results of your decisions like this is almost as exhausting as playing. The final score is based on the team attributes, but there is always the chance of a shock result. After the highlights, if it was a league match the rest of the results are given and the league table calculated and displayed.

MATCH OF THE DAY

Each week you are shown your financial balance sheet. Outgoings are wages, which depend on the number of players and their value, ground rent, and interest on your loan (if any). Incomings are gate receipts, which are based on your position and your opposition's position in the league. A good FA Cup run can also be a money spinner. At the end of the season, promotion and relegation take place, you are given a bonus according to your league position and a 'managerial success rating' is calculated.

There is a facility to SAVE the game at any point so that you can progress with one team for as long as you like. This feature is often available in adventure or chess programs, but I always find I forget where I've been, or what strategy I was following. With Football Manager, this is not a problem, as all the information you need is available at each stage.

Although I'm not great football fan, I really enjoyed playing this game. Despite having been converted from a ZX81 program, excellent use is made of colour and user-defined graphics. The game is very logically put together, so that the development of strategy and tactics has a real effect. For example, one of my teams got through to the fourth round of the FA Cup where it was beaten by a second division side. This upset morale and meant that our promotion bid failed. Perhaps I should have given up the FA Cup run and held some good players back — the possibilities are endless. Brian Clough had better watch out!

J.W.

Graphics	75%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

FORBIDDEN PLANET

TRS-80 I & III (48K)
£24.95 (disc)
Microdeal,
41 Truro Road,
St. Austell,
Cornwall PL25 5JE.

Forbidden Planet is an adventure text game (without the use of graphics) but with the extra addition of speech. This game follows standard adventure format with a question and answer theme. You are placed in a fantasy world of danger with a quest to carry out, and action is controlled by word commands which the player enters at each stage of the game.

This adventure takes you a step further by allowing the computer, by means of an amplifier connected to the auxiliary jack of the cassette cable, to talk to you in (fairly) plain English. I must admit that I was surprised at the clarity of the words, though after a while I did get tired of hearing 'OK' shrieked at me.

I have not managed to complete either this or the second game in the series, Forbidden City, but the inclusion of a female sounding voice that occasionally occurs in Forbidden City was a welcome change. As the voices lack any feeling I hope that the authors continue with variation of sex to break the monotony.

Both Forbidden Planet and City are not over-difficult but the novelty of the voice deserves to be added to your collection.

If you normally expect to pay around £25 for a 48K disc game then try this one. One tip though, don't mistreat it once bought, there is no back-up facility other than returning it to the retailer.

D.B.

Graphics	N/A
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

FORTRESS OF EVIL

Colour Genie (16K)
£7.95
Algray,
Algray House,
33 Bradbury Street,
Barnsley,
South Yorkshire S70 6AQ.

One of several adventure games now available from Algray, Fortress of Evil follows a format that is becoming standard for this kind of game. You wander through square rooms, shown in 3D with the odd object lying about on the floor, and carry out actions using time-honoured phrases like "GET SWORD" and "STAB DEMON".

It's worth experimenting with commands, because the program will accept quite a wide vocabulary. Movement is controlled by the cursor keys for the four pole directions, and function keys for actions like climbing up or down stairs.

It is fairly difficult to do well at Fortress of Evil, mainly because you can suddenly be bumped off at critical stages in the game, Though this might at first appear to make the game more challenging, since there is no way of being reincarnated you have to reload the whole game all over again to find out where you went wrong. Very irritating.

To make the game more annoying still, Algray obviously decided that sparse, incomprehensible instructions should be the order of the day.

As adventure games go, Fortress of Evil is really rather tedious and, at £7.95, rather over-priced to boot. The graphics are nothing special, and don't make the most of the Colour Genie's facilities.

I.O.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	30%
Play it Again	20%
Value for Money	10%
Star Quality ★	

FOUR CHALLENGING GAMES

Jupiter Ace
£5.50
Remsoft,
18 George Street,
Brighton BN2 1RH.

This games compendium from the Remsoft stable genuinely lives up to its challenging claim. With the speed of FORTH these games certainly do need real skill and their difficulty is increased by the gooey rubber keys of the Ace.

The games themselves are not exactly new, but if this is what you think FORTH is for you'll enjoy mastering them and gradually improving you skill.

In **Saucer**, flying objects more like rockets than saucers appear in swift transit from left to right and you have nine chances to zap them. Sound and flashes crown your (rare!) successes.

Driver involves you in a mad ton-up attempt to keep your skidding car on the winding road, with penalty points piling up against you all the time, while **Maze** lets you steer an exponent signal much more sedately through its labyrinth in search of the almighty dollar.

Parachute is a FORTH version of the Microl game of the same name for the ZX Spectrum, where you release a parachutist from a plane and guide him safely to earth in the dropping zone.

Instructions to all these games are clear and comprehensive, there are no loading problems and when your trigger finger gets tired you'll find it well worth your while to dissect the dictionary to see how they all run.

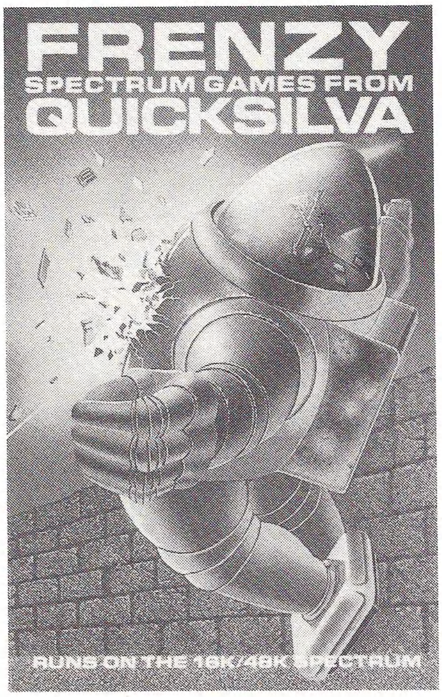
G.M.

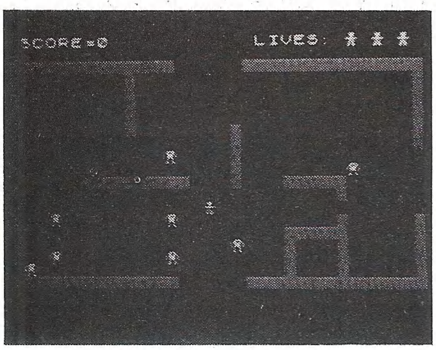
Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	42%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	71%
Value for Money	90%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

FRENZY

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£4.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton SO11 1LL.

For years I have been a SF fan, but one book seems to have eluded me; the book of the Faluvian Empire. I became so engrossed with the excerpt from the book on the cassette inlay that I quite forgot it was the program on the cassette that I was reviewing. However I came





back to earth, and loaded the program with no difficulty.

All the instructions you need appears on the screen, and the key overlay provided ensures that you have the essential commands at your fingertips . . . literally.

When you press start, a maze appears on the screen. This represents the corridors of a space fort, populated with five kinds of robots, who, together with evil Orville, are bent on your destruction. A record of the highest score is kept for reference.

The action is very smooth, and once you have got used to the controls the game is a lot of fun. It would be even better using joysticks.

B.B.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	90%
Instructions	95%
Play it Again	90%
Value for Money	95%

Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★

FROGGER

VIC-20 (+3K)
£9.99
Rabbit Software,
380 Station Road,
Harrow,
Middlesex.

Frogger is another VIC-20 version of an arcade game, although really it could be labelled as how did the chicken cross the road. The answer being with great difficulty.

You have two basic hazards. There is a motorway then a barrier and beyond the barrier a river. In this river you have logs which you need to jump on to cross the water. But there are also crocodiles. And if you jump on them too near the mouth, you lose and they eat you.

The object of the game is to reach the other side, where there are slots for five frogs. You are allowed three frogs to start and each time you reach the other side, you are given another one. You must cross the motorway without being run over. Jump across the barrier and then cross the river. Once at the riverside, you have to find logs or crocodile backs to jump on to reach the other side. It seems basically simple — but once you are sitting at your VIC-20 things change. Your reflexes must be very fast indeed or you will end up splattered underneath a lorry on the motorway.

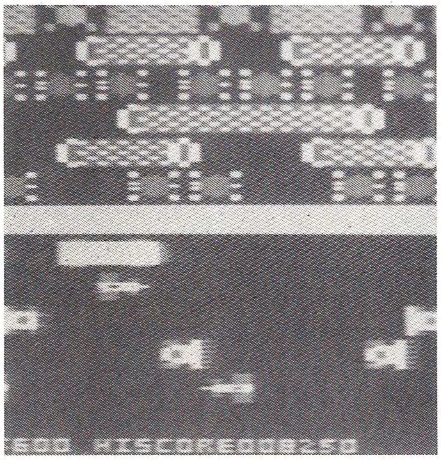
If you are lucky enough to reach the other side five times, all is not over. This game has four levels. As you reach each new level, the number of crocodiles dramatically increases and the amount of traffic on the motorway makes it almost suicide to cross.

You can use the keyboard with A for up, Z for down, L for left, and : for right. But I preferred to use the joystick. Because Frogger looks so simple, it is easy to become addicted when you find things aren't so.

N.A.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	72%
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	70%

Star Quality ★ ★ ★



FROGGER PLUS

Genie 1
£4.99
Buttercraft Software,
14 Western Avenue,
Riddlesden,
Keighly,
Yorkshire.

A machine-code version of the arcade game, you have to move your frogs safely across a busy road then over a river, using turtles, lily pads and logs as stepping stones. But watch out for the crocodiles!

Though instructions on how to get into the game are displayed, the rules are not clearly stated, and knowledge of the arcade version seems to be assumed. The instructions state that sideways movement is via the '<' and '>' keys. But both of these are shifted characters, and '.' and ',', the unshifted versions of the same keys, work just as well.

Reasonable graphics, considering the low resolution offered by the 2 by 3 pixel screen, but you really need a sound box to take advantage of all the effects.

R.M.D.

Graphics	75%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	50%

Star Quality ★ ★ ★

FRUIT MACHINE

BBC Micro (32K)
£8.05
Superior Software,
69 Leeds Road,
Bramhope,
Leeds.

Fruit Machine is the only non-arcade-type game from Superior Software. It is also the only program in their catalogue that I would not personally recommend. It isn't that it is a bad program, indeed, the graphics are excellent, but I just cannot see the point in sitting in front of a screen playing a one-armed bandit. Where's the fun in it without a slot for the winnings to fall out of?

However, the program itself is well written and well presented, only lacking in prompts to remind you of the winning combinations. All the features that you would expect are there: hold, nudge, gamble, collect and so on.

D.C.

Graphics	75%
Ease of Use	15%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	20%
Value for Money	30%
Star Quality ★	

FUN AND GAMES

Dragon 32
£6.95
Shards Software,
10 Park Vale Court,
Vine Way,
Brentwood,
Essex CM14 4UR.

This is the best of the Shards programs I have seen — a bumper package with some novel ideas.

Artist is a competition for up to four people. The computer asks for various inputs to create the parameters and then does the rest for you. It creates an abstract which is continually changing and which you stop when satisfied. The choice is then yours — either you or the computer must judge the 'paintings'. A nice routine where the computer deliberates and the chooses a winner.

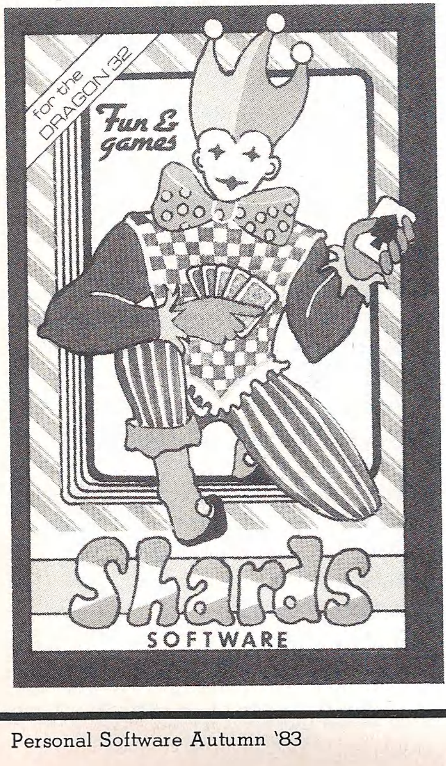
Gold is a joystick operated romp through minefields to collect the glittering ore. Circles is good fun as well: a memory game where you have to pair off coloured circles. A simple concept used effectively.

Most unusual is Musical which allows the computer to control the cassette player for a game of musical chairs. A must for the childrens' party, complete with a list of names and eventual winner.

Other games are familiar enough and well presented. Noughts and Crosses challenged the younger children, while Brain provided the older ones with a good game of mastermind.

Donkey is a terrific party game using a joystick and sound for pinning on the tail. Snap; Anagrams and Dice complete the offerings on this well-thought-out compendium.

M.P.



Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	95%
Play it Again	95%
Value for Money	90%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

G

GALACTIC CHASE

Atari (16K)
£16.00
Softcell Computers.
Contact:
Atari International (UK) Ltd,
Atari House,
Railway Terrace,
Slough SL2 5BZ.

A close copy of the arcade game Galaxians. The aliens swoop down in small groups, first bombing your ship, then attempting to ram it.

Bonus points are awarded for shooting down the command ships, and an extra base is received at 7,000 points. This copy even has the galaxians that 'loop the loop' at the bottom of the screen.

An option for two players is included, and an option to start at a higher level. The sound effects are sufficent for this type of zap-it-if-it-moves game, and the invaders themselves are very colourful.

Having seen the cartridge Galaxians now available, I would still choose this very cheap but very good copy.

M.F.

Graphics	82%
Ease of Use	61%
Instructions	72%
Play it Again	82%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

GALACTIC EMPIRE

Atari (32K)
£16.50
Adventure International.
Contact:
Atari International (UK) Ltd,
Atari House,
Railway Terrace,
Slough SL2 5BZ.

From the same stable as Preppie, this game does not reach the same heights. It is a tactician's game, with the objective of conquering the 20 planets in the galaxy.

You begin with ownership of one. By building fleets and taxing your people, you must build fleets strong enough to overcome the opposition, who vary in technological ability.

The game has very limited graphics, which do little to enhance a very slow-moving game. Particularly annoying is that each time you move your fleet, the shipboard computer prepares a report which takes up to a minute to complete.

If you have a week to spare, and the patience to go with it, this game is for you.

M.F.

Graphics	20%
Ease of Use	28%
Instructions	75%
Play it Again	22%
Value for Money	30%
Star Quality ★ ★	

GALAXIANS

BBC Micro (32K)
£8.50
Superior Software,
69 Leeds Road,
Bramhope,
Leeds.

Galaxians is another of the old favourites, and whilst this is not a full implementation of the arcade game, nor are any of the others that I have seen. Sadly, none of them have the circling aliens that swoop down at you in formation.

However, the aliens in this game do move about quite a lot and show fiendish intelligence in avoiding your lasers. Just when you think you are safe from one it reverses direction and crashes straight into you — very frustrating.

There are six skill levels — the sixth requiring more skill and dexterity than I have at the moment. The levels are well chosen and should last most players quite some time. A high score table is also included. The program loaded first time and contains good instructions. The graphics are well presented and smooth, even when the action gets frantic.

My only complaint is about the sound, which is very exciting at first but begins to grate after a while. This is a common fault that applies to most games and not just Superior Software so how about an option to cut out the sound or at least reduce it, you software writers?

D.C.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

GALAXIANS

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£4.95
Artic Computing,
396 James Reckitt Avenue,
Hull,
North Humberside.

From the arcade game of the same name, Galaxians is very like Space Invaders and the rules are virtually identical. The main difference is in the screen display. There are no shields for your laser base to hide under, and the invaders do not attempt to reach the ground and land.

Occasionally groups of aliens break off from the left or right flanks, flip over and swoop down, firing missiles at you as they go. In Artic's version this is the only time at which the aliens fire, but as time goes on more and more break off and it becomes very difficult to dodge them — let alone hit them.

This is a well-written version and the graphics are fast, although they tend to flicker slightly. The little aliens flip and swoop gracefully. Ample instructions are given at the start, though the game is really self explanatory.

I.O.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	50%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	65%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

GALAXIANS

ZX81 (16K)
£4.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton.

Whoever wrote the blurb for Galaxians has tried hard to make the scenario arresting. Avoiding the high technology lasers found in most invader games, the writer has opted for an antique bomb thrower with small furry bombs to fight off the giant gaseous birds dropping exploding eggs on the peace-loving Fragnn of the planet Ptreenfurt. "Splach, ploof, ftang . . ."

The attackers comprise two types of Galaxian: Ws are fewer, less exposed, and therefore worth 10 times as many points as Vs. Swooping Galaxians are worth ten times as many points as Vs. Swooping Galaxians are worth more than those in formation.

For each game you select speed, firing rate and the numbers of Galaxians swooping. You then move the bomb thrower from side to side with the 6 and 7 keys, firing with the 0. Your current score is displayed continuously, and when the game ends, with the destruction of the third bomb thrower, your final score is added to a table of rankings.

Galaxians can be played very fast — too fast for me, especially when the number swooping was set high. Instructions are well presented, and a demonstration game is played on initial entry.

C.C.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

GALAXIANS AND GLOOPS

ZX81 (16K)
£4.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton.

Quicksilva have produced an excellent game of Galaxians for the ZX81. The action is fast and responsive and it is a pleasure to play. Two types of Galaxian move in formation across the top of the screen, and swoop down attacking your base. You have three lives and the speed, firing rate and the number of swooping Galaxians are adjustable by the player. You get more points for hitting Galaxians as they swoop down rather than those in formation.

Scoring is displayed on the screen, and at the end of each game your score is entered onto a league table which can cater for up to 15 games/players.

The first batch of swooping Galaxians are particularly good at searching out and destroying your base, and some deft manoeuvering is required to avoid their attack. Thereafter the battle is fierce but a high score can be achieved by the experienced player. If it becomes too easy, the level of difficulty can easily be increased.

A fast-moving and impressive machine code game. Nicely boxed and with Gloops — a maze game — on the B side of this cassette, it is reasonable value for money.

N.P.

Graphics	55%
Ease of Use	72%
Instructions	65%
Play it Again	57%
Value for Money	68%
Star Quality ★ ★	

GALAXY INVADERS

ZX81 (16K)
£3.00
Bridge Software,
36 Fernwood,
Marple Bridge,
Stockport,
Cheshire SK6 5BE.

After hearing so many good reports about this cassette, I decided that I must see it. I sent off on a Bank Holiday and it arrived four days later — good service, you must admit.

When you have loaded it, (I did it first time), it runs automatically. You are asked what level you want to play on, between 0 and 9. On level 0 it is just about possible to have a long game, but you have to be a complete expert to score anything on level 9. The game is flicker-free but that is replaced by the fact that the aliens 'shimmer'. This means that it is hard on the eyes and therefore difficult to play for longer than half an hour. Apart from this fact, the game is very good and I can see that much more thought has gone into it than into some (most) ZX Invaders. The shapes of the invaders are very good, considering that they can only use the Sinclair character set.

One thing which I discovered is that by using Tim Hartnell's method of finding out how much memory a program uses, this Invaders takes up just over 2K. In some of the advertisements it says that a 16K RAM pack is required. Bridge Software are not the only company to do this, by any means. (Tim Hartnell's method is: "Print Peek 16396 + 256 * Peek 16397 — 16509" When this is used as a direct command, it will print the number of bytes which that particular program has used).

This is definitely one of the best 'Invaders' type games on the market at the moment for the ZX81. It only takes up just over 2K of memory, so do not be put off if you do not have a full 16K expansion. It has adequate instructions.

A.L.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	50%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

1K GAMES

ZX81 (unexpanded)
£6.00
Artic Computing,
396 James Reckitt Avenue,
Hull HU OUA.

First the good news: the tape contains 11 games. Now the bad news: all the games are written in BASIC. I consider these games to be poor quality, graphically limited and uninspired.

Most of them use a flickering animation technique. I'm sure a company with Artic's expertise and reputation could have produced better. Writing them in machine code, for instance, would make 100% improvement. The games are: Slot Machine, Art, Slalom, Catch Me If You Can, Space Pirate, Spacefire 1, Spacefire 2, Car Crash, Man-eating Budgies, Maze and The Wall. Some of the ideas are good and would have produced interesting games if written differently.

The tape loaded first time and the instructions supplied are clearly written. Children aged between six and 10 may enjoy these for five minutes or so, but anyone else would be better advised to use their money to buy a book or magazine of 1K programs and type them in. There would be more fun and satisfaction and the game is likely to be just as good as any on this cassette.

If I had to choose I would say that Maze and The Wall were the best. They were nearly interesting.

R.E.

Graphics	28%
Ease of Use	20%
Instructions	50%
Play it Again	25%
Value for Money	20%
Star Quality	

GAMES OF LOGIC AND CUNNING

BBC Micro (32K)
£9.70
Golem Ltd,
77 Qualitas,
Bracknell,
Berkshire RG12 4OG.

Five different games of logic and cunning designed for use by young computer users. They are Auction, Flip, Reverse, Telepathy, and Hexal5 and they vary widely in quality, interest and playability.

I doubt whether Flip and Telepathy would hold the interest of children for more than a short time; Auction, Reverse and Hexal5 are better.

In Auction, you try to buy antiques at auction by outbidding fellow bidders. There are two options, either to bid against the computer, or bid against another player, it is a challenge to try and beat the computer, but the game is not wildly exciting to play.

The aim of Reverse is to rearrange a row of letters in the least number of moves. This game has good graphics and is compulsive to play.

Hexal5 can only be played on Model B, and is a graphics version of a classic game. Hexadecimal digits (0-9, A-E) have to be arranged in order on a square grid containing one blank square. Taxing, even for adults!

This collection is varied in both quality and type of game, but is a little over-priced.

P.C.

Graphics	50%
Ease of Use	28%
Instructions	82%
Play it Again	59%
Value for Money	50%
Star Quality ★ ★	

GAMES OF STRATEGY

BBC Micro (16K)
£15.00
BBC Publications,
35 Marylebone High Street,
London WIM 4AA.

GALAXY This just qualifies as a game of strategy, but is very good with semi-real action. What you have to do is to destroy the alien race known as the Kyrons. The way you go about this is to use your ship 'Endeavour' to go to various sectors of the galaxy to destroy the Kyrons, before they attack you. The Teletext display is simple but effective. You can choose between three levels of difficulty and your aim is to destroy about 50 Kyron ships in a specific time. There is quite a lot of position play but there are a deal of ship encounters. There are three possible views of where you are, the local sector, eight parsecs by eight parsecs in which stars and bases (where energy is recouped) are shown. Then, there is a long range scan showing the surrounding sector and finally, there is the galactic situation based on information that you have discovered through the long range scan. This galaxy you have to clean up is eight sectors by eight sectors. The dangers of this game are running out of energy or being destroyed by the Kyrons. Their weapon is the phaser — a kind of energy weapon which irradiates in all directions and depletes your shield energy — which you set through one of the nine controls. '1' moves you about; '2' gives a long range scan; '3' phaser energy (depletes their shield); '4' photon torpedos — you have 10 — which are directional and destroy whatever is in their path; '5' sets your shield level to protect you from phaser energy; '6' gives you short range scan; '7' galactic situation; '8' freezes the game; and '9' lets you relinquish command. Apart from the lack of sound, this is a very good and engaging game.

GOMOKU This is a very interesting game which contrasts with GALAXY in that it is very simple in operation but complicated in strategy. This ancient game could be called 'Mega noughts and crosses'. The differences are that the grid is 19 by 10 not three, and the aim is to get five in a row of your counters. You simply move your cursor with the cursor keys and press Return when you want to place your counter and see where the computer wishes to put its counter. A nice touch is that the computer's counter flashes a while so you can see where it went. The computer is a good opponent and the clear clean graphics are good, but again there is a lack of sound in the program apart from the ovation at the end. This is a game well transferred from board to computer and at the average price of £2.50 in real terms, it is cheaper than the board game in the shops.

MASTERBRAIN The computer version of a game which has brought a deal of money to people who revived the ancient game of 'Bulls and Cows'. In this game your opponent thinks of a four figure number and once you have made a guess at it, they tell you how many figures you got in the right place and how many in the wrong place, and you have to deduct which numbers these are, and thus the number he or she is thinking of. A simple game which has been given a little twist in this program in that you guess the computer's number while it guesses yours. The game is also lightened by coloured numbers to help you if you want to play with colours. The display is quite good but looks a little cramped. The colours and numbers could have been accompanied by sound for more recognition. REVERSI This is a game also as ancient as 'GOMOKU' and 'MASTERBRAIN'. The way to capture counters of the opponent is to have your counter one side of the opponent and then one on the other, and as you capture a counter, it is turned over and becomes one of yours. The game is complicated, and the winner is the one with more than 32 counters at the end.

There is a '?' message for you to decide whether the computer plays against itself, against you, or you can play against your own opponent. All in all there is very good value in this pack since to buy three of the games in the shops would add up to about £15 at least. Also, these programs are not only great for accessability and easy play but good on strategy. Like the tagline for REVERSI, 'A minute to learn, a lifetime to master' — that is what games of strategy are about so the inclusion of GALAXY is a little unadvised, even though it is a very good program. It is a pity that sound is not employed apart from the winning ovation at the end. But all in all, a pack that is well worth buying.

D.W.

Graphics	50%
Ease of Use	52%
Instructions	53%
Play it Again	59%
Value for Money	58%
Star Quality ★ ★	

GAMES PACK 1

Dragon 32
£6.91
Gem Software,
Unit D,
The Maltings,
Sawbridgeworth,
Hertfordshire.

Space Attack, Sheepdog, Torpedo and Snake are the four BASIC games in this compendium.

As far as I am concerned, Snake is the only game that's challenging enough to have much long-term appeal. It's an excellent version of the old game where you have to eat randomly-placed blocks. Control is by joystick or keys, and the display uses low-resolution graphics.

As for the rest . . .in Space Attack you are in the top left hand corner of the screen, and have to shoot at an enemy ship in the bottom right corner. To do this, you enter the direction and velocity of your shot.

Random planets half-heartedly block your way; and the enemy is meant to return your fire but doesn't. The path of your ship is not rubbed out, so if your next shot hits the path, a hit on the enemy is presumed. It just isn't worth playing.

From outer space to deepest countryside, you control a dog and have to round up three sheep in Sheepdog. Good graphics, but the game is rather slow, and the dog clearly needs obedience training; it doesn't respond well to the control keys.

And a thousand leagues under the sea in Torpedo, you are a submarine captain and have to launch a torpedo when a ship is in your sights. Good graphics give a realistic impression of looking through a periscope.

D.W.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	65%
Play it Again	55%
Value for Money	35%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

GAMES PACK II

Dragon 32
£6.91
Gem Software,
Unit D,
The Maltings,
Sawbridgeworth,
Hertfordshire.

Four items on this cassette, providing good value for money.

First comes Landing, a flight simulation program that surprised me with its tricky handling. It requires two joysticks — one for throttle control and the other for rate of descent and banking. There are three stages to this 'game', the approach, landing and stopping, all requiring a high level of coordination.

The first part is done by reading instruments which then, if successful, give way to some graphic sequences. It takes two to pilot and very rewarding when you succeed.

The second item is a good version of Hangman with a selection of about 150 words. Always a fun way to learn spelling.

16
Computers

Speedboat is a straightforward dash between two twisting banks, picking up points for hitting orange markers. Controlled by keys with space bar for speed change.

The game of Battleships is an old favourite assisted here by some appropriate graphic subroutines. Going from the grid reference, if you score a hit, you see what you've got as your shell homes in to its target.

I didn't expect much from a games pack but the quality of two gems, the flight landing simulation and battleships, was very impressive and well worth having.

All the necessary instructions come on screen and loading is straightforward. An enjoyable selection for all the family.

M.P.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	100%
Play it Again	90%
Value for Money	90%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

GAMES PACK III

Dragon 32
£6.91
Gem Software,
Unit D,
The Maltings,
Sawbridgeworth,
Hertfordshire.

Two games on this tape, Reversi and Pontoon, although you wouldn't know it from the cassette insert.

The instructions supplied on screen are comprehensive but tend to be confusing. Excellent title screens, however.

Reversi (or Othello) is in text mode and uses X and O to represent pieces. It is a board type game and involves capturing opponents' pieces by sandwiching them between two of yours. Play is between you and the computer.

Written in BASIC it is slow, even at the easiest of the five levels, and the use of a ? which appears to check out all possible moves, tends to make this game boring. It does play reasonably well, though.

Pontoon uses colour, sound and graphics and is an excellent computer version of the card game. The computer acts as banker, and one or two people can play. Again written in BASIC, but fast enough to be enjoyable.

With this type of game you really need a full set of rules and instructions to be printed on the cassette insert for reference.

They are complex enough to tax even the best of memories!

Both games loaded first time and I did not discover any bugs — well error-trapped, too.

R.E.

Graphics	72%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	46%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	65%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

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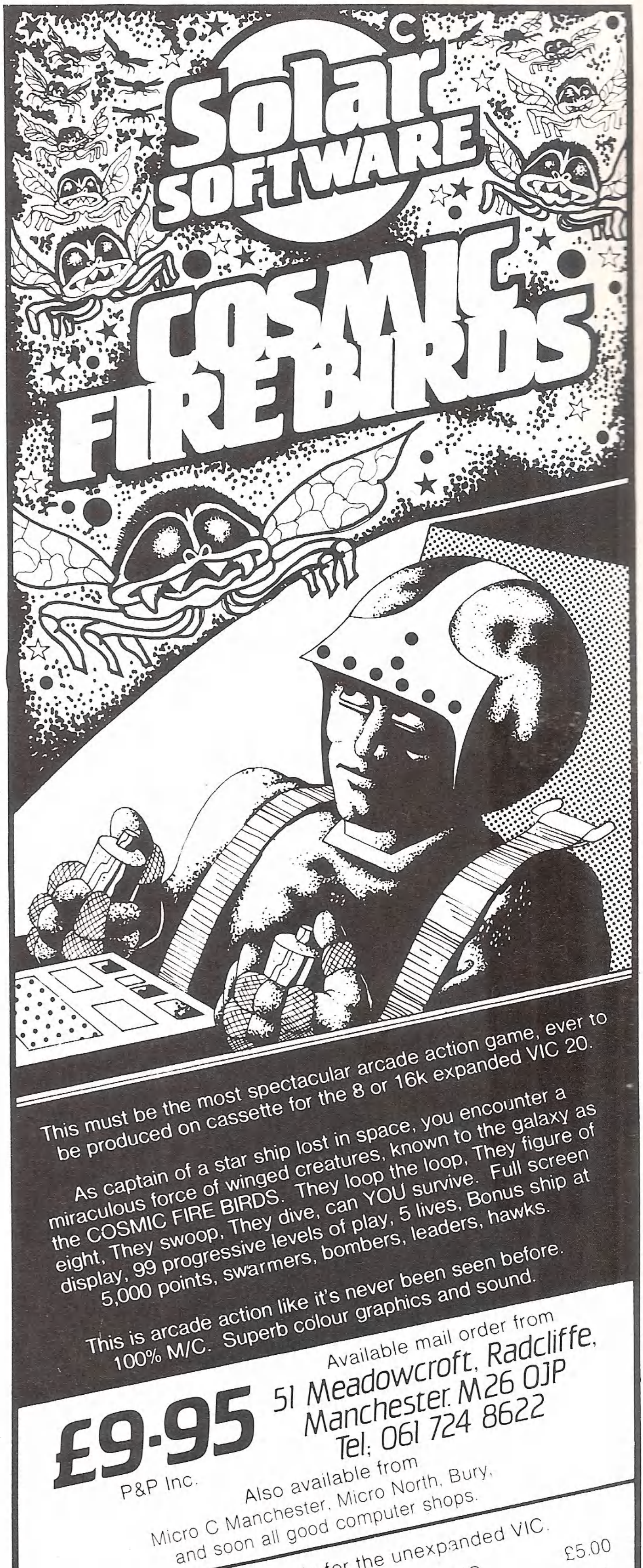

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GAMES PACK 4

Dragon 32
£6.91
Gem Software,
Unit D,
The Maltings,
Sawbridgeworth,
Hertfordshire.

This package takes a couple of minutes to load from cassette and actually contains two games: Sea Harrier and Sub Chase. The instructions for both games were adequate and both are played using the keyboard. Each had four levels of difficulty.

In Sea Harrier your objective is to land on an aircraft carrier without hitting too many clouds. The clouds can be dispersed using bombs but you run the risk of damaging your ship if you hit it.

I found that by flying at the top of the screen you can destroy the clouds at your leisure but it was still difficult to land successfully on the carrier.

In Sub Chase, your task is to sink the subs with your depth charges, avoiding the torpedoes being fired by the subs at your ship. Like Sea Harrier, this game used chunky graphics to form the shapes of objects and neither game had any sound effects.

I thought the games lacked excitement and imagination, but they would keep the youngsters quiet for few hours.

C.D.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

GAMESTAPE I

ZX81 (unexpanded)
£3.95
J.K. Greye Enterprises,
16 Park Street,
Bath,
Avon BA1 2TE

Of the ten 1K ZX81 games on this tape, only three — Simon, Code and Crash Landing — are without graphics.

Simon is the ZX version of the "repeat the bleeps and flashing lights" toy which was **the** computer plaything before pocket Space Invaders invaded. A sequence of names of colours is flashed up, which then has to be repeated. If you get it right, the sequence grows, and is also displayed for a shorter time. This is a well-programmed version of the game.

Code is a limited version of Mastermind (or 'Cows and Bulls' to pre-computer veterans) where the player has to guess a four-digit number. They've done well to fit it into 1K, and I found it quite hard since my usual strategy doesn't apply when duplicated digits are now allowed.

Crash Landing is a standard lunar lander program, and I was disappointed to find that, having crashed, I wasn't told what size crater I had made!

Of the graphics games, Klingons and Asteroids are pretty much the same program: you move your ship left or right, and the opposition scroll steadily up towards you. The difference (!) is that you have to hit the Klingons, but miss the Asteroids. UFO has another twist. The flying saucers stay put, while your laser base speeds automatically from left to right, and you have to judge the correct moment to fire a missile. Similarly with Bomber. You have to decide when to release the payload to hit the dam, and your bombing runs gets shorter as your aim improves.

Artist is a standard plotting program, allowing you to draw with pixels directed by the cursor controls. A COPY statement is built in, so it is possible to copy the screen onto the printer without stopping the program. Kaleidoscope produces a random symmetrical pattern with pixels winking on and off. Hypnotic stuff.

The last program on the tape is Giullotine, which is a two-player hangman game with a guillotine instead of gallows. You can guess what happens if the player loses. Thank goodness it is not in colour. I was very impressed with the amount which had been packed into 1K on this one.

Clear and simple instructions are given for each game, and I had no problems with loading. I found no errors in any of the programs, and they included 'data validation' routines where possible. For example, in Artist you couldn't plot off the screen, and similarly you couldn't go off the edge in Klingons and Asteroids. I would hope that most new ZX81 owners would soon be writing their own Lunar Lander and Mastermind games, but if they are in a hurry to see what their machine is capable of, then this tape provides ten good examples.

P.G.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	79%
Play it Again	65%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

GAMESTAPE 6 BREAKOUT

ZX81 (unexpanded)
£1.95
New Generation Software,
Freepost,
Bath BA2 4TD.

J.K. Greye are well-known for good quality software for the ZX81, and this fast 1K game is no exception.

The three bat angles in this version, with full screen display and the fast smooth action, make it a treat to play. It is written in machine code, and the speed (choice of fast, medium and slow), and the bat size (large or small) can be varied using POKE commands. Although written in 1K, this game can also be played on a ZX81 with 16K RAM pack (by POKEing RAMTOP **before** LOADing the program — full instructions are given).

Nothing as straightforward as the usual Breakout wall of bricks on this one either. The wall is built up of pound signs which convert to dollars when hit. Ten balls are available and a maximum score of $240 can be achieved (but not by me!).

The instructions state that bat movement is effected by using the cursor keys 5 to 8; on the review copy, however, any key in the top row from 1 to 5 moved the bat to the left, keys from 8 to 0 moving it right.

An excellent version of Breakout, and good value for money. That it runs on an unexpanded 1K ZX81 is a commendable achievement.

N.P.

Graphics	75%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	65%
Play it Again	65%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

GHOST HUNTER

Atari (16K)
£19.95 (tape); £22.95 (disc)
Arcade Plus,
Through: Creative Software,
48 Hartlip Hill,
Newington,
Sittingbourne,
Kent ME9 7NZ.

One of the Pac-man type games not to be wiped off the market by Atari is Ghost Hunter. This is a rival game which will be appreciated by those paranoids who enjoy spending their leisure time being pursued by threatening creatures.

The format of the game is much as you might expect; a complex labyrinth haunted by ghosts, who wander the passages looking for the animated mouth which (very unflatteringly) represents you, the player.

You have to run from them, eating the yellow dots on your way. When you reach the 'power pills' in each of the four corners of the maze, gobble them up if there are any ghosts in your vicinity. Then revenge is yours and very sweet it is. You become the chaser and now can eat up the ghosts for extra points.

Ghost Hunter is certainly not innovative, and I don't imagine it was supposed to be. Where it scores is in the execution; it's very, very fast, making it a very difficult game to play. Let your concentration wander for a moment and you will find yourself surrounded by ghosts ready to mercilessly devour you. You'll also find that your pursuers perform the sort of vanishing trick that would make Sebastian Coe turn pale and give up.

The best tactic to adopt is the hide and seek approach. Eat a pill and then lie in wait to ambush passing ghosts. As in the arcade game you won't be pursued until you are actually spotted so it is possible to hide fro unsuspecting meanies.

One fault lies in the scoring. At the end of the two-player game only the second players final score is left on the screen and unless the firs player makes a rapid mental note of his final score at the end of his last life it is impossible to tell who has won.

J.P.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	58%
Instructions	61%
Play it Again	55%
Value for Money	48%
Star Quality ★ ★	

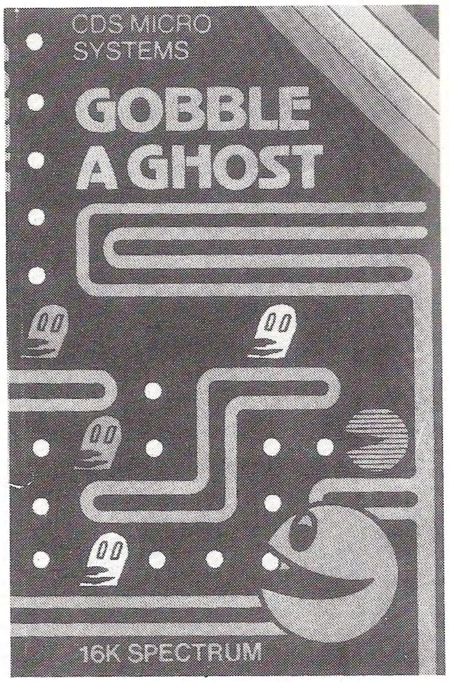
GOBBLE A GHOST

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.95
CDS Micro Systems,
10 Westfield Close,
Tickhill,
Doncaster,
South Yorkshire DN11 9LA.

No prizes for guessing what this program should really be called. Four ghostlike objects pursue you around a maze and gobble you up if they catch you. You have the opportunity of eating up to four power pills, each of which give you a temporary chance of revenge.

The controls used are 1 and Q for Up and Down, 9 and 0 for Left and Right. A sensible approach, because using cursor keys is difficult using two hands, but one I still found confusing as I tend to forget which axis is controlled by which pair of keys.

The graphics are fine and the sound unusually clear for the ZX Spectrum, but neither is particularly remarkable. Being a machine code program there is no jerkiness in the movement and so the game is perfectly playable from a keyboard, though not terribly exciting. A more than competent version of an overworked game.



N.W.

Graphics	85%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

GOBBLEMAN

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£4.95
Artic Computing,
396 James Reckit Avenue,
Hull HU8 0JA.

Have you guessed what this title really means? Yes, it is Artic's version of the well-known 'Pac-Man' game. Pac-Man is so well known now, that in a few years time it will probably be thought of as part of computer heritage: . . .In the beginning there were Space Invaders and Pac-Man, but the poor boys and girls couldn't afford 20p a game, so they invented the home computer . . .But we all know that that is wrong . . .ET invented them, that's what he wanted to phone home about!

Back to the serious stuff now and as the old saying goes:

when you have seen one Pac-Man, you have seen 'em all. As far as Gobbleman is concerned, this view holds true. Visually, it is very similar indeed to the original, with the same features such as pills, etc, but a slightly better maze, in that it is bigger. Overall, it is quite a pleasing display, except for two annoying points: the words 'ARTIC Computing' pulsating at you all the time you are playing certainly does become irritating, and also when the ghosts eat you, instead of a decent explosion or a picture of a Gobbled Man (get it?), it simply runs through part of the character set at that point — surely they could not have been that short of memory? The speed of the response is very good, and the tempo of the game has been well-selected — it has to be when there is only one level of play!

The ghosts are highly intelligent, and actually remember to run away from you when you have just eaten a pill. Unfortunately, they are the same speed as you, so they are rather difficult to catch up with at times, which seems rather illogical.

As far as being a Pac-Man copy it is good, so it is great for the Pac-Man enthusiast. But where it loses out is in that it is totally unadventurous. For example, the Acornsoft version for the BBC adds extra functions, and Gulpman from Campbell Systems Ltd actually expands on the game with variable speeds and tempo, and an enormous number of different mazes, plus a new laser feature.

So, if you are looking for a near perfect copy of the original Pac-Man then Gobbleman is definitely worth considering, but for something more challenging I would recommend Gulpman.

J.W.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	75%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

GOLF

Dragon 32
£7.95
Salamander Software,
27 Ditchling Rise,
Brighton,
East Sussex BN1 4AL.

This version of golf is perhaps the nearest you will ever get to actually playing the real thing on your micro. The game offers you nine different hole layouts and by playing through this course twice you achieve the standard 18 hole course.

Each hole is split into two parts. The first part is your tee off. In this, the tee, fairway and the hole are all displayed in high resolution on the screen. You line up your shot by using the up and down arrow keys to move a cursor in front of the ball. When you are happy with the position of your stroke, you then progress to a menu selection of clubs. Having made the choice of club for that shot you return to the high resolution display and hit the ball. This procedure continues until you manage to get the ball onto the green.

When you eventually reach the green, the display switches to an expanded high resolution picture of the hole and its surrounding hazards. Once again you move the cursor to position the shot and choose your club to make the stroke.

On the fairway you have displayed an arrow indicating the direction and strength of the wind. On the green this arrow indicates the direction and strength of the slope.

The fairway has its own share of problems to overcome, these are the rough, hazards and out of bounds. If your ball lands in the rough then there is a good chance that you will 'top' your next shot and therefore lose a stroke on your opponent. The hazards are trees and bunkers, if you land the ball in one of these then it will stop dead. Needless to say that it is very difficult to recover from these situations. If you play your ball into one of the out of bounds areas, then the ball will be judged as lost and you will have to play a new ball from the position where you took your last shot.

The game can be played by either one or two players, using the Stableford point system. At the beginning of the game you can input your own handicap, or have the computer randomly assign you one.

Overall this game is a very good implementation of a difficult to represent sport. I think it would be very difficult to tire of the challenge which this game represents. My one criticism is that there isn't a nineteenth hole to retire to when you have finished a game.

N.A.

Graphics	100%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

GOLF

VIC-20 (+3K)
£7.95
Audiogenic,
PO Box 88,
Reading,
Berkshire.

In my experience, golf programs vary tremendously, simply depending on the programming method used. Through good use of graphics, this package has done the job well.

Even with the extra 3K of memory needed, fitting the program in is a problem. Memory limitations account for several of the game's peculiarities. A booting program giving a full set of instructions precedes the main program, which loads automatically.

The data for each hole also has to be loaded from tape as and when required. While keeping the memory load down, this results in long pauses during the game. Shortage of memory also explains why only nine holes are offered.

Each hole is displayed as a map using standard graphics characters and colours to indicate the rough, sand traps and other hazards. This is done well, and the holes are attractive and clear.

You 'hit' the ball by first selecting a club and the angle of shot. The ball's behaviour is also affected by the value of your handicap. After each shot, the position of the ball is shown on the map as a flashing square, allowing you to see the effect of your stroke. This is a very good idea, in my opinion, which increases the feeling of hitting a real object.

Once the ball has landed on the green, you see a close-up of the putting field. When you succeed in holing the ball, your score card is displayed prior to loading the next hole.

Only one real complaint — too little information is given on the position of the ball relative to the hole after each shot. The program gives the approximate distances per character, but it's not easy counting the number of characters on a uniformly coloured area.

A.W.

Graphics	75%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	72%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

GREAT BRITAIN LIMITED

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£5.95
S.W. Hessel,
15 Lythman Court,
Cardwell Crescent,
Sunninghill,
Berkshire.

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You are Prime Minister and Chancellor rolled into one, and you can choose whether to represent Labour, Liberal, Conservative or SDP. Your task is to juggle the economy with the aim of staying in power for as long as possible.

At the start of the game the state of the nation is displayed, with information including the inflation rate, unemployment and your popularity. The Country Profile tells you the number of pensioners, children and companies, plus a breakdown of the revenue from all the various taxes. The Shopping Basket gives you the current prices of household items and the Retail Price Index. You then get your chance to meddle!

The tax and duty rates are displayed and can be amended, as can the welfare benefits which follow. Failure to maintain benefits can lead to riots and worse, so watch out. You are also given the chance to carry out social reforms such as expanding the Health Service or building new schools. As these boosted popularity, I found it best to time them as close to the election as possible (a trick I learnt from the real politicians!). If you manage to last five years, a General Election is held, which usually led to me being booted out, often in favour of some rather odd coalitions (Labour-Conservative!?!).

'Great Britain Ltd' is a game and not an attempt at realistic economic forecasting. Unlike real life, the effect of decisions is immediate and often drastic, such as inflation jumping from 10% to 120% in one year. But enough information is presented for a player to make very careful decisions based on the data, if he or she wishes to take it seriously.

P.G.

it
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY 82

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

GRIDRUNNER

Commodore 64 (+ Joystick)
£8.50
Llamasoft,
49 Mount Pleasant,
Tadley,
Hampshire RG26 6BN.

Gridrunner's action takes place on a yellow grid, representing Earth's latest solar power generator, now overrun by aliens. Your mission is to clear the grid with the aid of a super-balster.

A klaxon-like warning sounds as the screen alerts you: "Battle Stations. Enter grid sector 01." There are in fact 31 sectors you can choose to enter. Your small green blaster appears on the grid and moves freely with the aid of a joystick around the lower portion of the playfield.

Gridsearch squads which resemble wriggly worms come down very quickly and break into smaller worms when hit. They leave behind pods, which change shape and eventually explode, sending bombs hurtling down.

The XY Zapper also plants pods, and sends a lethal beam vertically up to catch you unawares. All these creatures can be killed by blasting away with your high speed cannon.

Gridrunner is rather like an abstract version of Centipede, with 'spacey' sound effects. Detailed instructions make comprehension and playing fairly easy, but the game moves so fast that it takes a little getting used to.

D.A.

Graphics	68%
Ease of Use	56%
Instructions	72%
Play it Again	66%
Value for Money	57%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

GRIDTRAP

VIC-20 (unexpanded)
£7.95
Sumlock,
Royal London House,
198 Deansgate,
Manchester M3 3NE.

If I had to choose one program to demonstrate the game playing potential of the unexpanded VIC-20, this is the one I'd choose.

You have to move your player over a number of bombs to defuse then and gain points, while at the same time avoiding the randomly-positioned skulls and the evilly moving industrial boot.

As if this was not enough, as you move over the screen you leave a trail behind you which you cannot retrace or cross over, although there is a special scroll facility which allows the screen background to be moved to the right or left to bypass any gaps in the screen.

Bonus points can be gained by moving over the randomly-placed flags. As you progress from one screen to another the number of boots pursuing you increases up to a maximum of four.

The game makes excellent use of the VIC-20's ability to change the dimensions of the television screen and to create double-height user-defined graphics.

The sound generators are also put to good use throughout the game, with a melody playing throughout the game independently of what is happening on screen. There is a constant display of score, hi-score, elapsed time and the time left until the bombs detonate.

This is for my money the best non-cartridge game available for the unexpanded VIC-20. See what you think!

M.B.

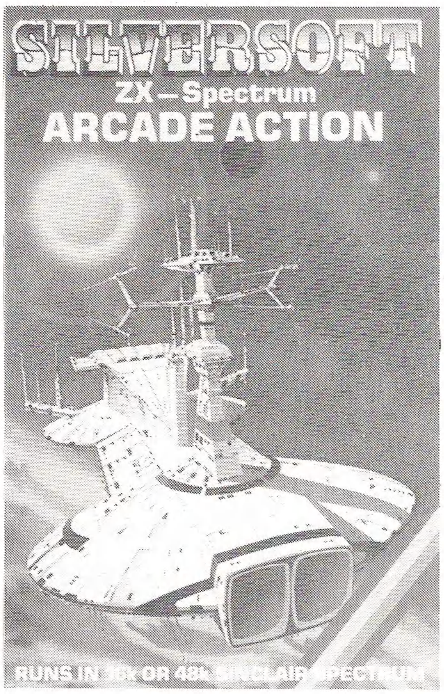
Graphics	91%
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	77%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

GROUND ATTACK

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.95
Silversoft,
20 Orange Street,
London WC2H 7ED.

Be warned: this program is addictive. With each run that ends in disaster, and most of them do, you feel that the reasons for failure are obvious and avoidable. With a slight change of tactics you should be able to do much better. So you try again — and again — and again.

Known to arcade devotees as Scramble, among other aliases, ground Attack provides you with three ships armed with bombs and lasers. Your task is to destroy enemy fuel bases while dodging ground-to-air missiles and airborne attackers.



The scenery, which moves from right to left, begins in the open air, but then goes into underground caverns which get narrower and narrower. There are nine alternative running speeds, ranging from fairly comfortable to impossible, and six control keys.

The instructions are brief but adequate. You have to work out the scoring basis for yourself, and the optimum tactics drawn on you as you gain experience. Destruction of one of your ships is shown in a spectacular and effective way, with appropriate sound.

No bugs or glitches were detected, and the program loaded without difficulty.

Excuse me. I must practice that ground-skimming laser attack. If I can get that right . . .

D.T.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	90%
Value for Money	85%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

GULP

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£3.95
Campbell Systems,
Rous Road,
Buckhurst Hill,
Essex I99 6BL.

I bought Campbell Systems' GULP form W H Smith for £3.95. When I bought the game I was under the impression that this was a kind of one 'ghost' Pac-man game under a new name. The only 'instructions' on the cassette for playing the game was "Can YOU outwit the GRUESOME GULPER that seeks out . . .gives chase . . .accelerates . . .and devours!". I had not much to go on. The game seemed to be saved under a name other than "GULP" as when I typed LOAD "GULP", it didn't load, and when I typed LOAD"" it loaded very easily. It took about two minutes to load. The game auto-ran. A menu appeared, it said: "A . . .PLAY, B . . .MAZE, C . . .SPEED, D . . .GRADE, E . . .RESET, F . . .SAVE, PRESS G FOR INSTRUCTIONS." I pressed G. I was reassured that the game WAS a one 'ghost' version of Pac-man, the 'ghost' being called a 'chaser'. You have 5 lives and you have to eat up all the dots in the maze. The more you eat the faster he gets. You have a choice of 5 different mazes, wow! The cursor keys are used to move. You are an '0' and you state in the middle of the screen (on all games apart from game 3 where you start at the left-hand side). The chaser is an inverse 'X' and he starts in the bottom right-hand corner. High scores are kept. Pressing newline again explained what the menu meant. The speed of the game could be altered by pressing 'c' and the appropriate number (1-9), and his acceleration could be altered by pressing 'd'. I set the speed to 1 and the acceleration to 1 for the slowest game. The maze was already set at 1 so I pressed 'A' to RUN. The maze flashed up instantly, obviously written in machine code. It looked suitably complicated. The game moved at a reasonable pace. One point I noticed was that your movement stopped directly a finger was lifted from the key. This is different from the movement in the arcades and makes the game much harder.

The maze lacked things like power pills and tunnels, but the fact that you could choose one of 5 mazes and choose the speed and acceleration seemed to make the game just as good. In maze 5 the walls of the maze make the world 'GULP'! The game is very addictive and great fun, but I do have a few grumbles:

When the screen is cleared of dots the game does not display a new screenful. Instead it relies on you pressing the '0' key to end the game.

Some mazes have more dots than others, so if you win maze 2 for instance, you could still beat that high score on maze 1. However, this problem is compensated for by a function that allows you to reset the high score. My last grumble is that when a life is lost the chaser places another dot in the square that he started off from. This means that to obtain the best score you have to lose all your lives. This seems pretty idiotic.

However, after all those grumbles I still stick to my statement that the game is exciting, addictive and great fun to play.

M.P.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	50%
Instructions	50%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

H

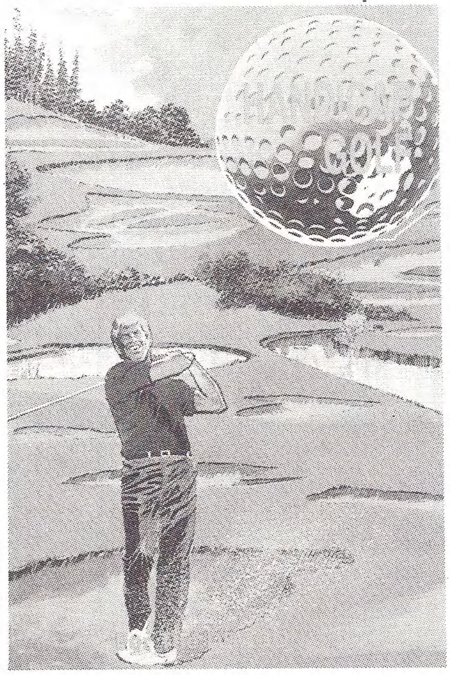
HANDICAP GOLF

Dragon 32
£6.00
Computer Rentals,
140 Whitechapel Road,
London E1.

Written in BASIC, this is a reasonable golf simulation, and once I had got used to its little eccentricities I found it enjoyable to play.

I had trouble with loading at first, but once the volume had been set correctly the program loaded in about 50 seconds. Clear instructions included with the cassette make up for the lack of instructions or rules in the program itself.

Each hole in the course is displayed separately, using low resolution graphics to show the fairway with randomly placed trees and other obstacles. The programmer has gone overboard, so to speak, on the lakes, which appear on every fairway, and it is sometimes difficult to see the fairway for the trees.



Either one or two people can take part, but if two are playing, handicaps for both must be entered. To play each shot you have to enter direction (by using a clockface format from zero to 12), and then strength (0-250).

Great care must be taken to enter these numbers correctly — one false move and the screen scrolls, and the whole program has to be re-run.

P.T.

Graphics	20%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	75%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	30%
Star Quality ★ ★	

HANGMAN

BBC Micro (32K)
£9.14
Micro-Aid,
25 Fore Street,
Cambourne,
Cornwall TR14 0JX.

This is really an international version of Hangman as it can be played in five languages; English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. You can also store your own Hangman words in the program.

There are two levels of difficulty — easy or hard. Each game starts by asking the word to be guessed. The easy option shows dashes on the screen indicating the number of letters in the word to be found. The hard option doesn't. You have nine guesses, and the whole word can be guessed at the start or letter by letter.

If you fail to guess the word in nine goes, you are unceremoniously hung whilst the Death March plays.

If you enjoy a challenge as well as word games then this old and tried game is fair value for money — and might even improve your foreign languages.

P.C.

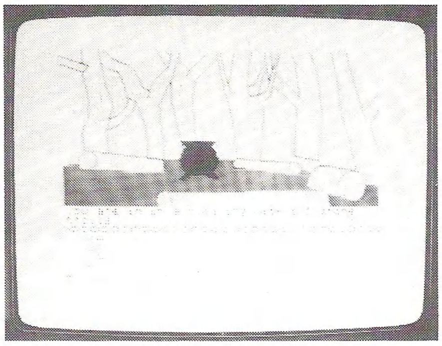
Graphics	40%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	69%
Play it Again	62%
Value for Money	61%
Star Quality ★ ★	

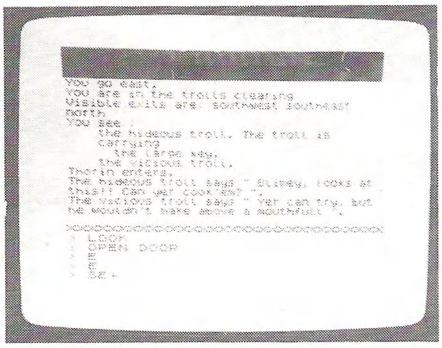
THE HOBBIT

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£14.95
Melbourne House,
131 Trafalgar Road,
London SE10.

Once upon a time, a young professor, bored to distraction with marking School Certificate exam papers, wrote on a blank sheet of paper 'In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit'. That was over fifty years ago, and at the time neither the professor, J R R Tolkien, nor anyone else had any idea what a hobbit was. Eventually the story was told, and ever since, **The Hobbit** has been one of the most popular and best loved children's books. Its popularity and that of **The Lord of the Rings** which followed, is matched only by the seriousness with which good some Tolkien fans dissect the books for allegorical meaning, never intended by the author. So it takes a brave group of people to set out on an 18 month adventure to re-write The Hobbit as a computer game. Fortunately for 48K ZX Spectrum owners, the team at Melbourne House have managed it, and in pretty good style too.

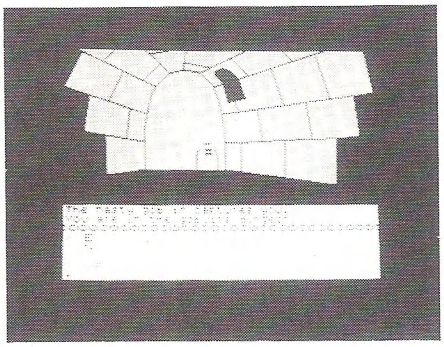
The program was originally being developed on a TRS-80, but was converted to the ZX Spectrum in order to make use of high resolution colour graphics. The plot of the adventure has been designed to follow the original book as closely as possible, in fact to such an extent that a copy of the books is supplied with the program in order to provide additional clues. Also part of the package is a 16 page book of instructions, although if you find the prospect of digesting them not to your liking, there's nothing to stop you rushing headlong into the enterprise. After all, that's what Bilbo did! The instruction book is well-structured and clearly laid out, although disappointingly lacking in hints!





```
You go east.
You are in the trolls clearing
Visible exits are: southwest southeast
north
You see :
    the hideous troll. The troll is
    carrying
      the large key.
    the vicious troll.
Thorin enters.
The hideous troll says " Blimey, looks at
this!! Can yer cook 'em? ".
The vicious troll says " Yer can try, but
he wouldn't make above a mouthful ".

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
> LOOK
> OPEN DOOR
> E
> E
> SE.
```



ENTER THE DRAGON

The game is set in Middle Earth during its Third Age, when it was inhabited by all manner of creatures, long before the world was overrun by Man. You take the role of Bilbo, the hobbit of the title, and your task is to steal treasure from a dragon, 'a most specially greedy, strong and wicked worm called Smaug'. In the book, Bilbo has 13 dwarves to help him get there and (hopefully) back again, but in the program you have just one companion, Thorin Oakenshield. He is an 'enormously important dwarf' not least because we are warned that if he gets killed, Bilbo is most unlikely to survive. Along the way you will meet elves, wolves and orcs as well as the famous wizard, Gandalf the Grey, who is usually not far away.

The program is written in 40K of machine code and data, so it takes about four minutes to load. While you are waiting, you have an impressive picture to look at of Smaug and the Lonely Mountain which contains his lair. The program starts by drawing a colour picture of Bilbo's nice bright hobbit-hole, complete with round green door and wooden chest waiting to be filled with dragon's plunder.

The use of graphics is one of the features which makes The Hobbit special. The adventure contains something like 80 locations, of which no less than 30 are illustrated. The graphics are based on drawings commissioned from the artist Kent Rees, and while none of them are quite as elaborate as the picture of Smaug, they do contain a remarkable amount of detail. By using special techniques, each picture is stored in only 3,000-4,000 bytes. The outline is drawn very quickly, but the filling in with colour is done line by line and so does take a few seconds. It can be slightly tedious when the same picture keeps being re-drawn, but this is only a minor drawback as the addition of graphics as good as these adds a whole new dimension to the adventure.

PICTURE THIS

Once you have admired the pretty picture, pressing any key gives the written description of the location. This also has some special features. Firstly, the screen is split into two 'window's, the top 17 lines being used for the illustrations, the narrative descriptions and responses from the various characters. This is in upper and lower case, and by redefining the character set, the output is displayed with 42 characters per line. The bottom 5 lines make up the 'communication window' in which you type your commands and if the computer doesn't understand or cannot carry out your request, a message is displayed here. The lower display is made up of standard 32 characters per line capitals. Some keys have special meanings — '?' menas repeat the command, 5, 6, 7 and 8 can be used to move West, South, North and East, 0 deletes the last character entered and Shift 0 deletes the whole line.

Commands are entered using what the authors have named Inglish, which they claim is the most sophisticated natural language recognition program yet developed on any micro. You can enter quite long sentences, such as 'Attack the warg carefully with the knife' and 'Pick up the rope and sword'. More than one sentence can even be entered, up to a maximum of 128 characters. The authors claim a vocabulary of more than 500 words, which is extraordinarily large. Yet, despite the size it is very quick, although the system is not perfect. For example 'light' is a command common to many adventures, and is accepted in The Hobbit, although nothing happens and the curious message 'You light' is displayed. Similarly, if you attempt to cross the enchanted river by saying 'Cross', the program says 'You cross', but when you look around you find that you are, in fact, still stuck on the original side.

CRIES FOR HELP . . .

Several special commands are also available. 'Print' copies everything in the upper, narrative window to the printer. The graphics displays are not copied, which is perhaps just as well as it would slow down the game if they were and also the black and white result wouldn't do justice to the colourful designs. Your commands are not sent to the printer, so you cannot necessarily use the output to follow an earlier path. Still, Bilbo is meant to be fond of making and reading maps! 'No-print' turns the printer off. 'Save' saves your current position on tape; just the necessary data is saved, so it only takes 30 seconds. The program doesn't use the standard ROM routine, and I found that the tape position was important as starting too early gave a tape loading error. The data saved can also be verified before continuing, and is reentered with 'Load'.

'Score' tells you how far into the adventure you have delved, based on the percentage of the locations you have discovered. I never managed to get very far at all before a troll, warg, or some other unidentified creature drastically rewrote the book by killing me off and sending me back to the start. 'Help' is a very useful command, and will quite often give a hint as to the way out of your latest predicament.

Two other featues of The Hobbit that the authors are very proud of are 'Animtalk' and 'Animaction'. The first allows you to speak to anyone present so, for example, you can enter 'Say to Thorin "examine the map"', and he will either respond or say 'No', depending on his mood. 'Animaction' refers to the fact that all the animals and individuals have an independent character and will be moving around and making decisions on their own, without waiting for you to do anything. So far about the only animaction I have witnessed is Gandalf behaving uncharacteristically indecisively, by continually giving and then taking back a curious map. Also, Thorin seems to either wait, enter, say 'Hurry up' or star singing about gold, apparently at random.

A WIZARD GAME

Despite having only explored little more than an eighth of 'Wilderland', I have seen nine graphic locations and picked up which I assume will have some purpose. I haven't yet found a way into the roots of the Misty Mountains, but I hope I will as I greatly look forward to the riddle contest with Gollum (incidentally the riddles are different to the ones in the book, not surprisingly!). At a couple of recent micro exhibitions I have noticed that the staff on the Sinclair stand (when not selling hundreds of ZX Spectrums) have been deeply engrossed in playing The Hobbit rather than any of the dozens of other programs available on their stand. The fact that they had neither solved nor tired of this program says quite a lot! It is certainly a marvellous game, which should set the standard for the future Spectrum adventures. However, in spite of the excellent graphics and packaging, I feel that £14.95 is a rather high price for a program which is clearly going to sell many thousands of copies.

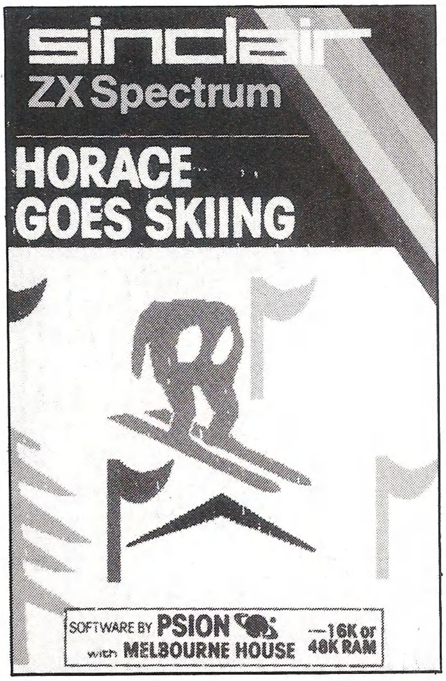
P.G.

Graphics	75%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	90%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HORACE GOES SKIING

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.95
Melbourne House,
131 Trafalgar Road,
London SE10.

This a sequel to Hungry Horace, from the same stable of writers, but not, I hope, the end of Horace. In this adventure, he has the princely sum of $40 and wants to go skiing, but first of all, he has to cross over a very busy motorway.



The traffic on the motorway is a first-class example of the use of animated graphics, but this does not stop it knocking poor old Horace down. Every time he is knocked down he has to pay an ambulance fee of $10, which makes the National Health Service seem a good proposition.

However, if Horace spends all his money on ambulance fees, he can earn some more by bravely dashing backwards and forwards across the motorway collecting points (hopefully). 1000 points will earn him the price of a pair of skis, or an ambulance ride.

If you can successfully get him to the ski slopes, there is more money to be earned by skiing down to the finishing line. . .but watch those trees!

I would have liked to have seen instructions on the screen as well as on the inlay, but I found that by using keys 1, 2, 3, and 4, I was able to keep a tight control — well tightish — over the game.

Fun to play. You need a fair bit of patience to cross the road, but it is worth the effort.

B.B.

Graphics	100%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	90%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

I

INKOSI

BBC Micro (32K)
£5.95
Chalksoft,
Lowmoor Cottage,
Tonedale,
Wellington,
Somerset TA21 0AL.

You are the head of that well-known tribe, The Inkosi, and your aim is to rule successfully for ten years.

As a ruler you are nearly all-powerful.

While being a successful leader means trying to maximise the amount of food and cattle available to the tribe, problems and calamities are not far off. War, harvest failures, the witch-doctor, hunter & raiders, rats, and different rates of population growth, all underline the point that a leader's life is not always an easy one!

If more than one third of the tribe starves or the population grows to more than 3000, then the witchdoctor quickly ends your leadership days.

P.C.

Graphics	69%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	85%
Play it Again	72%
Value for Money	81%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

INVADERS

BBC Micro (32K)
£7.50
IJK Software,
9 King Street,
Blackpool,
Lancashire.

This is a full feature implementation of the arcade game, with six rows of eight invaders descending and bombing your base and three shields. Good for beginners and experts alike, having an increasing difficulty level, it is written in machine code and uses to the full the sound and colour graphics of the BBC.

The packaging is drab and instructions simply consist of how to load, added by a rubber stamp. But the program loaded first time and a clear and concise set of instructions was presented on screen.

Playing the game was enjoyable and just proves that you cannot keep a good game down. The keys — Z and X for left and right with the Space bar to fire — are easy to use and respond to the slightest press.

Apart from the basic version, you can set up your own game by varying any of the features: fast or slow missiles, shields or no shields, even invisible Invaders!

The only improvement I can think of would be a chart of high scores and player's names — the highest score is kept and displayed anyway.

R.E.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	35%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	78%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

INVASION FORCE

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£4.95
Artic Computing,
396 James Reckitt Avenue,
Hull,
North Humberside.

A threatening alien flagship hovers above you, and the aim of the game is to destroy it. But to fire at it you must first blast holes in the force field. To hinder you, alien bomb ships flap across the screen above the force field, firing rapidly. The force field plays strange tricks, turning one of your missiles into three missiles falling towards you.

If these hazards can be avoided and the flag ship destroyed by hitting a central control point (which flashes blue and white) then your score is boosted, according to how long it took you, and a warning of superior aliens is given. If your time runs out, or if you lose all of your three lives, then the game is over.

There are two levels of play, standard or suicidal — in the second level, the game rarely lasts more than a few seconds! The graphics are colourful and, to add a nice twist, when you have been hit a little Artic lorry trundles on to repair your base.

The instruction sequence is long and complex, although the game is largely self-explanatory. Invasion Force is simple but addictive, and makes a change from the usual 'Bang-Bang, kill the aliens' format.

I.O.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	85%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

INVISIBLE MAN

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£5.95
Chalksoft,
Lowmoor Cottage,
Tonedale,
Wellington,
Somerset TA21 0AL.

This is a program for the 48K model to help children learn about compass points and co-ordinates by hunting for an 'invisible man' hidden in a 15 by 8 grid. The idea is to key in co-ordinates until you find all the positions his body occupies on the grid. If your attempt is unsuccessful, you're given a hint in the form of a compass bearing — "try South West", for example.

On-screen instructions are very brief, but quite explicit — as long as you already know what co-ordinates are! You have the choice of three levels of difficulty, based on the time limit you have to complete your search.

Though the idea behind the game is a good one, both the introduction and playability leave a lot to be desired. There isn't enough variety to hold a chil'd attention for long, and the graphics are nothing special.

A nice tune is played when a game is completed successfully, but I doubt if this is enough to encourage the repeated use and learning by repetition that should be the aim of the game.

P.F.

Graphics	55%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	50%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	45%
Star Quality ★ ★	

J

JACKPOT

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£4.95
Computer Rentals,
140 Whitechapel Road,
London E1.

Yet another of those 'one-armed bandit' simulations where the only money you stand to lose is what you paid for the program in the first place.

Computer Rental's version provides all the facilities of a large casino machine, such as Nudge, Gamble and Hold, depending on the contents of a Features box. You start off with a modest 200 units (£s, $s or whatever, the program does not say) to bet with. Each spin costs 10 units.

The graphics are very good and reasonably fast, although the program is written entirely in BASIC. As well as the three reels, all the payout possibilities are displayed. When money is put in the machine a little token with '1' on it rolls along the bottom of the screen into the money slot.

JACKPOT
For the SINCLAIR 48K SPECTRUM

If a winning combination occurs, these little tokens also cascade into a little box at the bottom of the screen. Should you be lucky enough to win the jackpot you can sit back for a bit, since the impressive payout sequence takes about 20 seconds.

Jackpot is well documented with on-screen instructions. But anyone thinking of buying it should be warned of its addictiveness.

I.O.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	85%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

JELLY MONSTERS

VIC-20 (unexpanded)
£19.95
Commodore Dealers,
Contact: 675 Ajax Avenue,
Slough,
Berkshire.

Commodore have released 'Jelly Monster' — their cartridge version of the game 'Packman'. The verdict: very good indeed.

It is a faithful reproduction of the pub game which captured the hearts and wallets of countless thousands across the country. For those of you that have been on other planets for the past year or so I will explain.

The idea behind Jelly Monsters is that you are a large yellow blob with a huge mouth (!) and a voracious appetite, whose aim in life is to travel round a maze eating the dots that are scattered on the floor. The only thing preventing you from indulging in your passion is the fact that also inhabiting the maze are four pretty nasty 'Jelly Monsters'. They spend their time chasing you round the maze with the unfortunate habit of killing you if they catch you.

All is not lost though, because situated in the four corners of the maze are power pills which, when eaten, allow you to chase and devour the Jelly Monsters. The scoring for this game is fairly simple, 10 points per dot and 200 points for the first Jelly Monster, 400 for the second, etc.

It is refreshing to see a program which makes such good use of the VIC-20's facilities, the graphics are superb, the colour and sound are well implemented and the action is fast and smooth. My only criticism is that as the Jelly Monsters move around they do flicker slightly. Otherwise — superb graphics.

In conclusion, Jelly Monsters is a highly addictive game (as can be seen from the USA, where everyone above the age of 10 seems to be expert at it) and it will keep you in front of the VIC-20 for hours on end. Be warned . . . I speak from experience.

C.P.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

JUMBO

TRS-80 I & III
£17.25 (tape); £19.55 (disc)
Molimerx,
1 Buckhurst Road,
Town Hall Square,
Bexhill-on-Sea,
East Sussex.

Strap yourself to your seat and sit back safely in anticipation for a rocky ride in this Jumbo Jet.

The latest version of this flight navigation game from Molimerx proves to be one of the more exciting and comprehensive on sale. Called simply Jumbo the object of the game is to climb courageously into the cockpit of your plane, man the controls, take off, fly and land the massive aircraft at one of a number of chosen airports.

Sounds simple enough in theory, but first you have to wade through the 39-page manual to work out what the numerous controls are for. It is much more complex in practice.

What makes this a cut above other cockpit simulation games is the use of extensive instrumentation inside the aircraft rather than trying to present a visual intepretation of the outside world. Incorporating an artificial horizon gauge is another out-of-the-ordinary feature. This shows an outline of a plane and a line indicating where the horizon is in relation to the plane, thereby allowing you to see what you're actually doing with the plane (which will often give you a nasty shock).

Some of the instruments that confront you are a clock, fuel gauge, altimeter, vertical speed indicator, flap setting, stall speed indicator, power indicator, elevator indicator, attitude indicator, aileron setting, turn indicator, compass and air speed indicator.

What I didn't like about this program was the slow response to some of the controls and it seemed impossible to press two controls at the same time. The latter would not normally be important but combined with the slow reaction speed it did cause problems.

Ease of use is not a strong point of this game mainly due to the huge instruction manual you have to read before starting the game. Nevertheless Jumbo will give you a sense of achievement once you've got the hang of it, if you want a complex flight simulation.

C.P.

Graphics	61%
Ease of Use	10%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	10%
Value for Money	20%
Star Quality ★	

JUMPIN JACK

VIC-20 (unexpanded)
£7.95
Sumlock,
Royal London House,
198 Deansgate,
Manchester M3 3NE.

An unfamiliar name, but the picture on the inlay card should leave you in no doubt. This is another version of Frogger. Frog lovers among you may not like the picture, but frog lovers probably don't like the game.

The program, written entirely in machine code, has the usual features and the graphics are excellent. The little tune that plays continuously is very nice to start with, but I found it started to grate after a while.

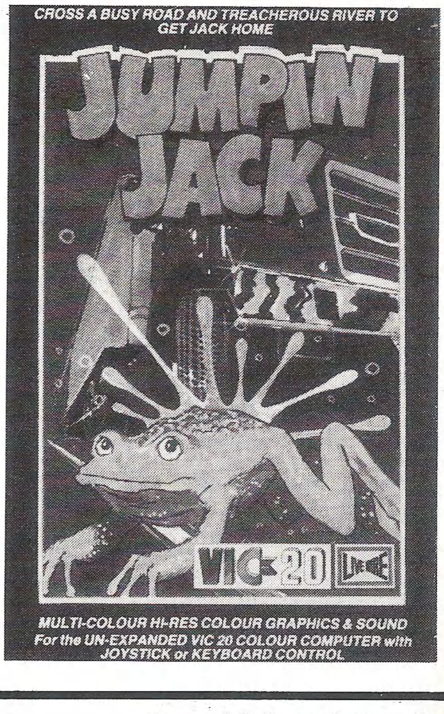
Control is from the keyboard or a joystick and both are easy to use. The keys (Z and C for left and right and / and , for back and forward) are placed within easy reach of each other and don't need to be hunted for.

Each stage is harder than the last, with the appearance of faster cars and the disappearance of some of the larger logs. The time limit also goes faster the further you get.

According to the inlay Jack is on his way home after spending the night with his lady friend, so if he gets run over, don't feel too sorry for him — I'm sure he'll die happy. If you've got a VIC-20 and you're a fan of Frogger this just might be the game for you.

G.F.

Graphics	85%
Ease of Use	78%
Instructions	20%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	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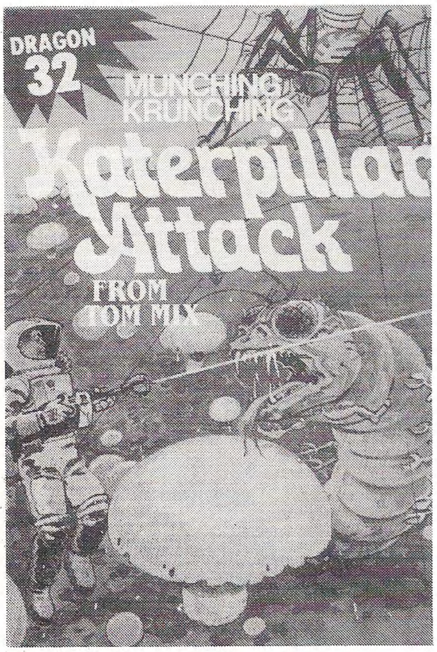
KATERPILLAR ATTACK

Dragon 32 (+Joystick)
£7.95
Microdeal,
41 Truro Road,
St. Austell,
Cornwall PL25 5JE.



A fast machine code version of Centipede, entertaining, colourful and making a refreshing change from Space Invaders and the like.

The on-screen Katerpillar is a docile-looking creature that breaks up into segments when zapped, and proved to be a great hit with my younger children (from eight downwards).

I couldn't help wondering who the game is actually aimed at, though; because of the lurid cassette box design, showing a hideous space monster being attacked by a space man, I would not have picked Katerpillar off the shelf as a children's game.

No spaceman, but you have a laser base at the bottom of the screen and fire to your heart's content. The screen soon becomes littered with mushrooms and spiders — all of which could be potentially dangerous . . .

You lose a life when a spider touches you, making a raspberry sound that would have had Miss Muffet in stiches — my kids were rolling about.

Highest score is kept, but I wish you could input your name. They cheat in my house, and everyone claims top score.

Katerpillar provides excellent optional instructions, looks good on screen, plays well and allows the Dragon 32 to appear in its rightful place as second to none.

M.P.

Graphics	100%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	100%
Value for Money	90%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★ ★

KONG

Colour Genie (16K)
£8.95
Algray,
Algray House,
33 Bradbury Street,
Barnsley,
South Yorkshire S70 6AQ.

Based on the arcade game Donkey Kong, already very popular in the USA but not quite as well known here, Kong is a faithful reproduction of the original.

The idea of the game is to manoeuvre your little man through different situations to try and rescue a young lady held captive by the infamous King Kong at the top of the screen. The action takes place on four different screens, each one supposedly harder than the last.

There are five controls to move the man left and right, up and down and to jump over or on to obstacles. The movement can be controlled either by the keyboard, or with joysticks (if you happen to be rich enough to won a set), and is easy to master.

The first screen consists of a series of girders joined together by ladders which must be climbed. To hinder you, Kong throws barrels which roll down the girders and ladders. These must be jumped over or crushed, using a hammer which you must retrieve from a hook above one of the girders. But this hammer is unreliable and can disappear from your hand at any time.

As soon as you reach the damsel in distress at the top of the screen the display immediately changes to the next setting: a series of conveyor belts carrying hot pies. You must travel along the belts, and jump off, without hitting a pie or ending up in the oven in the middle of the screen.

The next screen is probably the most difficult and consists of a lift system which is constantly moving and a series of levels which must be jumped. The lift must be in exactly the right position before you can safely jump on to or off it, and it takes a while to find exactly the right point. After the lift, you must jump from level to level across open shafts while avoiding springs which Kong throws down them. The next level is a mere formality. It consists of eight plugs which must be removed from the girders, causing them to collapse and so kill Kong, rescuing the young lady into the bargain. The game then repeats, unfortunately with no apparent increase of difficulty.

Minimal instructions are provided, the author clearly assuming you know how to play already, but it is fun to experiment with the game and find out what you can and can't do. The program is entirely machine code, making for beautifully animated and smooth graphics.

An excellent game, making full use of the Colour Genie's facilities and well worth buying.

I.O.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	85%
Instructions	40%
Play it Again	82%
Value for Money	85%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★

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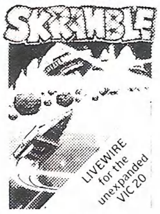
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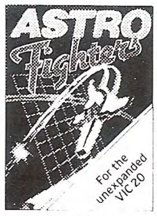
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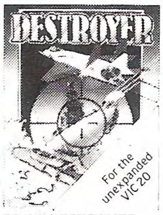
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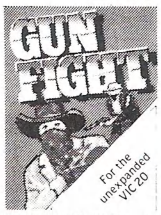
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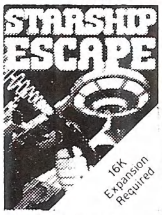
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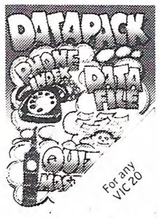
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KOSMIC KAMIKASE

VIC-20 (+3K, +8K)
£7.99
Audiogenic,
PO Box 88,
Reading,
Berkshire.

Some people never tire of Space Invaders, but it's nice to try a variation. This one has two on the same tape, for 3K or 8K memory expansion.

The packaging is deceptive, showing a jet fighter attacking an aircraft carrier and a close-up of a World War Two Japanese pilot. It remains another version of Space Invaders.

It seems slow compared with other games of this type. You have to shoot suicidal aliens for one point each and their mother ship, which scores five. You start with one battle station of your own and, unlike other versions, you are awarded another for every 25 points.

Cursor keys are used for left and right movement and the Space bar for firing. A joystick can be used for more flexibility.

For all Space Invaders addicts who are looking for a little extra, without spoiling the fun.

P.R.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	50%
Play it Again	58%
Value for Money	52%
Star Quality ★ ★	

KRAKIT

ZX81 (16K), ZX Spectrum (16K)
£9.95
Artic Computing Ltd,
396 James Reckitt Avenue,
Hull HU8 0JA.

Krakit is a new program from Artic Computing which claims to be the ultimate adventure for the ZX Spectrum/ZX81 with the added bonus of a generous prize if you should be the first to 'KRAKIT'. Retailing at £9.95 in this country, it certainly isn't cheap — but is it worth the cash? There is only one way to find out — cassette in, LOAD "RULES", press Play, sit back and wait.

Because of the complexity of the program, the rules and clues have been split up into two separate programs on the 16K ZX81 and ZX Spectrum. So, while we are waiting for the program to LOAD, I'll tell you something about the package itself.

THE STORY SO FAR . . .

The story is that your eccentric father has left you £10,000 in his will, but (and it is a big but) to claim the money, you must first solve 12 clues before you can gain access to the bank account in which the money has been placed.

The prize money actually exists and just to make things completely fair, Artic Computing have released the program simultaneously in America to run on the Timex 1000. Artic are quite definitely going all the way to make it successful and fun — not only has there been a lot of press on the package, but Artic have set up a 24 hour telephone answer line so that contestants can keep themselves informed about the status of the contest and the amount of prize money now available (if the prize is not claimed the amount of money is increased on a weekly basis).

OK, it looks as though it has almost LOADed. Hurrying to get my registration form so that I can quickly claim my prize, I sit down waiting for the program to begin.

You are first greeted with a menu which offers you five options: how to register, rules and play, see a sample clue, how to claim the prize and see the real clues.

ALL CLUED UP?

The rules program is good. There is a nice sequence of graphics to start — a key moves across the screen and turns in a lock. After reading the rules, I pressed for option 3 and had a glance at the sample clue. After the solution has been explained to you, you are ready(?) to start on the real clues . . . which I did. So, LOADing the clues program, after a couple of moments (in ZX time, of course) up comes the title page:

```
WELCOME TO KRAKIT, THE
 ULTIMATE ADVENTURE
```

This certainly looks promising!

Then it's down to the real work of this program — the clues themselves. Their difficulty ranges from moderately difficult to downright impossible, but they are not all along the same lines as is so often the case with games.

Now for the one disappointment of the program — there are no graphics at all. Surely they could have 'jazzed' up the clues a little with some animated diagrams or moving pieces. That might sound a little silly, but it would be nice and would certainly brighten up the game.

As it is the program has been written almost entirely in BASIC, which seems rather wasteful of space and time, though fortunately (as you will soon find out) the time factor is not so important!

Actually playing the game is quite fun, but I fail to see the need to take the trouble to put it on a cassette and load it in and spend hours staring at a TV screen, when it could quite easily have been written out on a few pieces of A4 paper and sold for a tenth of the price.

As for the game itself, it is definitely good if you are into cryptic clues and mind-bending puzzles, but I would not say it was for the majority of games players. Needless to say, I have not filled in my registration form yet!

J.W.

Graphics	0%
Ease of Use	50%
Instructions	40%
Play it Again	40%
Value for Money	30%
Star Quality ★ ★	

KRAZY KONG

VIC-20 (+16K)
£6.00
Anirog,
26 Balcombe Gardens,
Horley,
Surrey.

Since the arcade version of this game is one of my favourites, I reviewed this tape with interest. I was not disappointed.

In case you haven't played the arcade game, it works like this: you take the role of a small man trying to rescue a kidnapped maiden from the giant gorilla.

ANIROG
VIC 20 16 K
Krazy Kong

The gorilla is lurking at the top of a series of platforms linked by ladders, and your man must try to get to the top.

He also has to avoid being crushed by barrels rolled down the platforms by the gorilla, or smash them using small mallets he picks up on the way. He can also win extra points by collecting baskets or umbrellas as he goes.

This is a faithful copy of the original and, bearing in mind the limitations of the VIC-20, uses excellent multicolour graphics.

If you reach the top of the screen, a new configuration of platforms is drawn. Screen three included an elevator which, due to a bug or my ineptitude, I'm not sure which, I was unable to mount. So beyond this screen, I can't comment.

Animation is smooth and fast with either joystick or keyboard control. A standard hall of fame is available for high scores.

A.W.

Graphics	77%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	62%
Play it Again	68%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

L

LABYRINTH

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.95
Axis Software,
71 Brookfield Avenue,
Loughborough,
Leicestershire LE11 3LN.

Labyrinth challenges you to find your way in three dimensions through a randomly-generated maze. Easy to play, the game tests your memory and perception of patterns to the full . . . all too often you find youself trying to exit through the entrance or walking straight past the exit!

After loading, you can opt to look at the simple instructions or plunge straight into the maze. There you can go forwards or backwards, move left or right, or, if things get really tough, choose to "give up" or call on the "help" facility. The latter briefly displays a plan of the maze showing your position; otherwise you can only see the walls facing you.

You choose the size of the maze yourself, from a 4 by 4 grid to a 10 by 15 grid, and the computer then creates a random maze and shows you the plan once before you enter.

On leaving the maze you can choose to see an action replay of your progress through the labyrinth. Time taken to find your way out, and a score based on time and number of moves are shown, and the highest score is recorded.

The tape loaded perfectly every time, and the game proved both enjoyable . . . and extremely frustrating!

P.F.

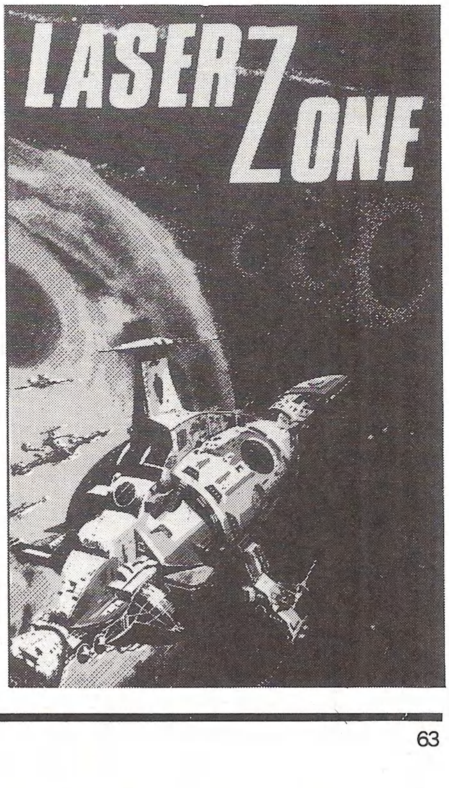
Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

LASER ZONE

VIC-20 (+8K)
£6.00
Llamasoft,
49 Mount Pleasant,
Tadley,
Hampshire RG26 6BN.

The aliens have landed, they're marching to get you — what can you do? Bludgen them with an Electro, or swing your Plasma Cannon with speed and finesse and pick them off. Give me the bludgen any day, but supplies of Electros are severely limited . . .

"Your objective: simply to vaporise as many nasties as you can before you are yourself rendered into your component atoms", says author Jeff Minter



about his latest offering. Straightforward enough, considering you control two spaceships armed with those Plasma Cannons.

Snag is, the aliens that evade your crossfire to reach the tracks on which the ships manoeuvre are then out of your normal fire-field. You must either turn a ship to fire diagonally or hope there's just one more Electro up the tube.

All of which makes this fast, innovative game a pretty tough test of coordination skills, and while good fun for all, it will perhaps be most appreciated by those who take their games seriously.

Sound is effective, graphics attractive and clear (even in monochrome). I encountered no bugs or loading difficulties. The program has plenty of features, 31 skill levels (plus training mode), and comes with particularly full instructions — which you need. You also need a good joystick and, like the adverts say, dedication!

M.P.

Graphics	75%
Ease of Use	68%
Instructions	88%
Play it Again	65%
Value for Money	72%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

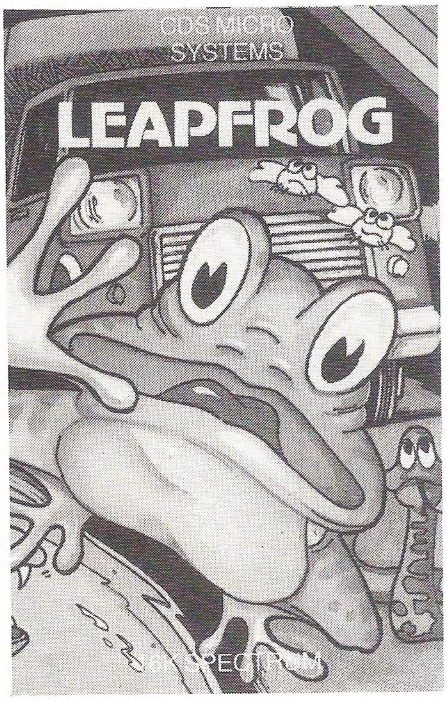
LEAPFROG

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.95
CDS Micro Systems,
10 Westfield Close,
Tickhill,
Doncaster,
South Yorkshire DN11 9LA.

A standard version of the arcade game Frogger, where a frog has to be guided through four lanes of traffic, across a river by leaping across logs and turtles and finally into one of five homes. If the home is already occupied by a crocodile you are eaten, but if there is a dragonfly there you score a 50 point bonus.

Other hazards are the risk of the long-suffering turtles sinking beneath the waves, hence drowning you, and a hungry snake lurking on the riverbank (though I never encountered this).

You move your frog using the cursor keys and the S key to start. Attractive graphics and sound, though the tune at the beginning and end of each game gets a bit tedious after a while, especially as it delays the next game.



A good solid implementation of the game, but with no innovations. It is quite compulsive but has one important fault — the keyboard seems to be read unpredictably. Sometimes I was certain I pressed the correct key but had no response; at other times the briefest touch sent the ambling amphibian too far forward and into disaster.

N.W.

Graphics	92%
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	85%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

LUNAR RESCUE

VIC-20 (unexpanded)
£5.95
Lyversoft,
66 Lime Street,
Liverpool.

The scenario for Lunar Rescue has you trying to rescue stranded scientists from the surface of the moon. To do this you must release your lunar lander from the mother ship and descend through a meteor storm to the surface below.

You have just two controls for the craft: left and right thrusters. At the start of the game you are displayed at the top of the screen, contained within the mother ship. By pressing one of the thruster keys you are released and you begin to fall towards the surface.

If you clear the meteors you then have to steer your craft onto one of the raised platforms and rescue the scientist. Having picked up the scientist you must then retrace your steps by manoeuvering back through the meteors and docking with the mother ship. All these manoeuvers must be completed without touching anything but the scientist or else your craft will explode.

This game suffered the fate of most others written to run in the unexpanded machine, that of good graphics but jerky movement. Given that the VIC-20 has a small screen coupled with large characters, it makes it very difficult to steer the craft when it moves in character size jumps.

C.P.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

M

MAD MARTHA

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£6.95
Mikro-Gen,
24 Agar Crescent,
Bracknell,
Berkshire.

God help the designer if Women's Lib ever get hold of him! Mad Martha is a domestic adventure game. The task is to escape the house and get into town for a night on the tiles.

Failure to clear the marital home quietly awakens the wife who proceeds to chop you up into cat meat! A neat little graphic routine cheerfully depicts the dismembering of husband Henry, (nothing gory — honest).

MIKRO-GEN
MAD MARTHA
For 48K SPECTRUM

The game itself is a Hobbit-type text/graphics mixture, wherein you are given a hi-resolution picture of your present surroundings and progress — or not — by entering commands such as 'GET MATCHES' etc.

The program understands a fair number of words and is very easy to communicate with.

R.H.

Graphics	75%
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	65%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★

MARTIAN RAIDER

VIC-20 (unexpanded)
£9.99
Romik Software,
24 Church Street,
Slough SL1 1PT.

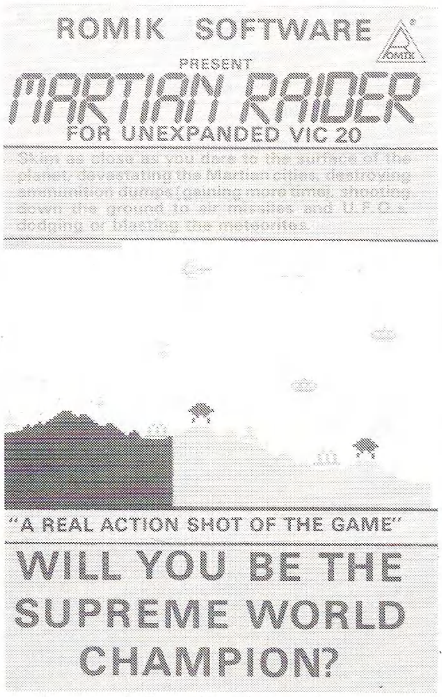
This is one of those 'fly your space ship over the surface of a planet and kill everything you see' games.

In essence, as you fly your space ship from left to right over a constantly changing landscape, you are assailed by one of three forms of enemy.

These are either missiles launched from the surface, UFOs or meteorites.

The surface of the planet is littered with cities, missiles and fuel dumps. Bombing or lasering any of these items earns you points.

You have three ships, each with a limited life span (time left is indicated by a horizontal bar at the top of the screen) and can gain extra time by bombing the fuel dumps. The ships can be controlled by either a joystick or the keyboard.


ROMIK SOFTWARE
ROMIK
PRESENT
MARTIAN RAIDER
FOR UNEXPANDED VIC 20
Skim as close as you dare to the surface of the planet, devastating the Martian cities, destroying ammunition dumps (gaining more time), shooting down the ground to air missiles and U.F.O.s dodging or blasting the meteorites.
"A REAL ACTION SHOT OF THE GAME"
WILL YOU BE THE SUPREME WORLD CHAMPION?

Overall I felt that the quality of the game was a little shoddy. The animation tended to be jerky and the display of information minimal.

Each time a bomb hit the surface, a square chunk (obviously a missing character) was removed. Whilst this didn't affect the play at all, it indicated a lack of attention to detail by the author. In today's cut-throat software market, such details matter.

The pace of play was fast and life could become rather difficult, especially in the UFO phase. But I felt that the incentive to win was lacking and the game really amounted to a test of endurance. Not a bad game — but not a **great** game.

A.W.

Graphics	78%
Ease of Use	65%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	50%
Star Quality	★ ★

MASTERMIND

VIC-20 (+8K, +16K)
£9.99 + £1.99 per subject.
Commodore,
675 Ajax Avenue,
Slough Trading Estate,
Slough,
Berkshire.

Based on the TV series, up to four players can take part. You are asked for their names and occupations and there are two sections, one for general knowledge and one for specialist subjects.

The game runs on a VIC-20 with 8K or 16K memory expansion and specialist subject cassettes cost £1.99.

The package comes complete with two cassettes — the operating system and general knowledge questions — plus excellent instructions showing screen pictures.

Questions on sport and games, wine and food, music, films and television, science and technology are already on the general knowledge tape. Scores are calculated in exactly the same way as the real thing.

An all-round winner.

P.R.

Graphics	0%
Ease of Use	78%
Instructions	87%
Play it Again	85%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★

MAZOGS

ZX81 (16K)
£10.00
Bug-Byte,
100 The Albany,
Old Hall Street,
Liverpool 3.

Mazogs is really a great new concept in computer games for the Sinclair, and in my opinion ranks alongside other such superb programs as J K Greye's Monster Maze and Psion's Flight Simulation. It really does show what some imagination, and a fair bit of hard work, can come up with for the trusty old ZX81.

Innovation, perhaps, is the key word. The majority of software houses are very clever at writing ZX81 adaptations of traditional games, or producing ZX81 versions of programs that were originally devised for its more expensive relations, but they rarely demonstrate real innovation. This, of course, is not to denigrate the very good and indeed necessary work that continues to be done by program authors. But it is software like Mazogs that is going to help change the attitude of that quite large body of people who see the ZX81 as just a toy, albeit a quite clever toy.

Mazogs is just the sort of program to impress your friends, and maybe convert a few sceptics into the bargain.

I will not explain the game in detail, as that might take away some of the fun. However, to whet your apetite, a *very* large and complex maze is involved. There are prisoners locked in the maze whose eyes blink, and who can guide you. There is treasure to find, swords for your protection, and — of course — battles to be fought with those nasty creatures, the Mazogs.

The instructions lack clarity, but it doesn't really matter. You'll have great fun learning the game by trying to play it.

BECOMING AN ADDICT

The game should perhaps carry a warning. For once, the description 'addictive' is an accurate one, and you will not feel much like relinquishing the television set to such things as BBC and ITV after you've had a taste of MZG. User-friendly aspects have not been overlooked in the program, and there is none of that frustrating blank screen wait while the computer is 'thinking' or setting up the game.

All in all, my conclusion must be that this is one of the tiny minority of programs which every ZX81 owner should possess, even if only to amaze those who are sceptical of the ZX81's computing power.

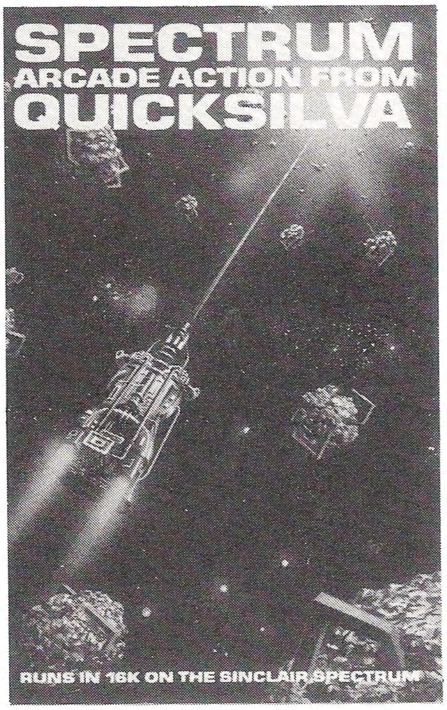
N.P.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	40%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

METEOR STORM

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£4.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton SO11 1LL.

Cyan outlines of meteors skim across a plain black screen in classic Asteroid style. Occasionally a pink spaceship, firing yellow bullets, bounces randomly into view.



Meteor Storm proved to be playable, enthralling and sufficiently fast to provide a challenge. The meteors increase in number and speed as the score mounts, and an audible warning greets the new reinforcement every 10,000 points. But this indistinct croak of "meteor alert" is hardly enough to justify the advertising boast of speech.

The program includes a sophisticated attract mode with a high score tale. Sound is used to good effect, and the meteors travel smoothly and quickly. The explosion displays could be better, though.

You can orientate the attack craft in eight ways using the top row number keys, and a keyboard overlay is provided. But control of the ship takes time to master, and the keys could have been better selected.

C.L.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

METEOROIDS

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£4.95
Softek,
324 Croxted Road,
London SE24.

When a game is advertised as offering Arcade Action, comparisons are bound to be made with the arcade version, and the home computer version inevitably comes off worse.

Having said that, the action of this machine-code game is very smooth. With a total of eight commands at your disposal, the game itself is very playable, once you have got the hang of the controls.

I enjoyed the graphics display while the program was loading, though in contrast with it, the program itself seemed a bit flat. The spacecraft look remarkably like a fly, and using my favourite command —

METEOROIDS
SOFTEK
ZX Spectrum
16 or 48K RAM

hyperspace — hopped about like one. No high score option is included.

B.B.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	85%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

MICRO CHESS

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£6.95
Artic Computing,
396 James Reckitt Avenue,
Hull,
North Humberside.

Micro Chess is a chess game for the ZX Spectrum and is, as far as I know, the only version available for the 16K machine.

Despite memory limitations it is well presented and easy to use, keeping to all the standard chess rules. Moves are entered by giving the row number and the column number; all illegal moves are simply ignored.

There is only one level of play, and response time is fast. But it plays a weak game — I once beat it in 36 seconds and seven moves.

Several nice features have been included. There is a 'help' option, in which the computer makes your move for you, and a clock is displayed at the top of the screen. The graphics are well designed, though it is a bit of a strain on the eyes to play on a magenta and cyan board.

Thorough instructions are given on the cassette box inlay, and on loading you are given the option of watching a demonstration game. In this, you are asked for an opening move, and the computer then plays both sides — entertaining to watch. Micro Chess would make an excellent chess tutor; a shame that it is such a weak player.

I.O.

Graphics	75%
Ease of Use	65%
Instructions	65%
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

MIND TWISTERS

VIC-20 (unexpanded)
£9.99
Romik Software,
24 Church Street,
Slough SL1 1PT.

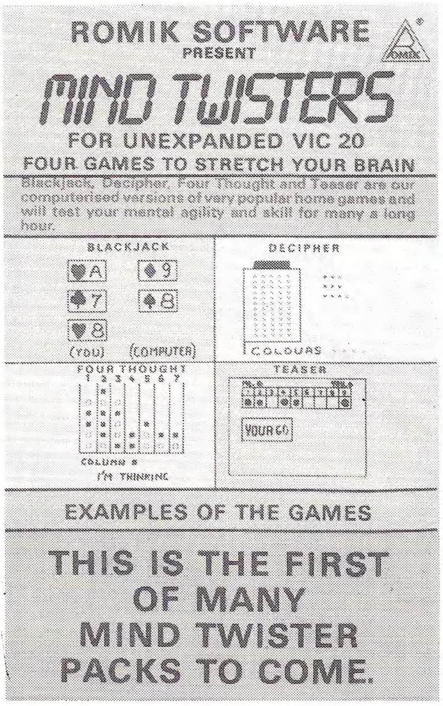
This is a compendium of four games, three well known, one a little more original: Mastermind (alias Decipher), Connect 4 (alias Four Thought), Blackjack and Teaser.

The review tape could have been substandard since loading was difficult and Mastermind was unloadable. However, the three games I did manage to run were well written with adequate graphics. Connect 4 played a particularly good game, even though it was a little slow.

Teaser was an odd one. You are presented with the numbers 1 to 9 and you take turns to take numbers. The winner is the first player to reach a total of 15 with three of his numbers. I found it easy to draw with the computer, but impossible to win.

Blackjack played British 'pontoon' rules. I did feel that the graphics were a little weak, but you can't expect much in an unexpanded VIC-20.

Assuming that Mastermind was up to the same standard, this is a reasonable collection of old favourites. VIC-20 owners who are fed up with Space Invaders could do worse than consider this package which is good value for the price.


ROMIK SOFTWARE
PRESENT
MIND TWISTERS
FOR UNEXPANDED VIC 20
FOUR GAMES TO STRETCH YOUR BRAIN
Blackjack, Decipher, Four Thought and Teaser are our computerised versions of very popular home games and will test your mental agility and skill for many a long hour.
BLACKJACK
(YOU)
(COMPUTER)
DECIPHER
COLOURS
FOUR THOUGHT
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
COLUMN
I'M THINKING
TEASER
YOUR GO
EXAMPLES OF THE GAMES
THIS IS THE FIRST OF MANY MIND TWISTER PACKS TO COME.

A.W.

Graphics	55%
Ease of Use	65%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★	

MINED OUT

Dragon 32, ZX Spectrum (48K)
£4.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton SO1 1LL.

The packaging and presentation of this game is very good. A lot of thought has gone into the blurb and the instructions are very comprehensive. There is even a demonstration game.

It's an interesting idea where your objective is to rescue Bill the worm. To get to him you have to travel through seven minefields which get progressively more difficult. You guide yourself through the fields with the arrow keys and the machine code assisted subroutines assure you of a fast response with on-screen scoring and high score record.

A nice feature is the replay

of your moves after a mistake thus showing you how you went wrong! In time you learn, like the proverbial rat in a maze, to respond correctly although further hazards present themselves to ensure that your job gets tougher.

All this is achieved on the low resolution screens which, graphically, is not very exciting. There seems to be a great disparity between the packaging and the visual product. I must confess I was disappointed. However, colour and sound are used dramatically and kept me interested.

It was helpful not to have to restart at rock bottom each time. Once on level three you had the option of restarting the level prior to your downfall.

M.P.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	100%
Play it Again	90%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★ ★

MINER

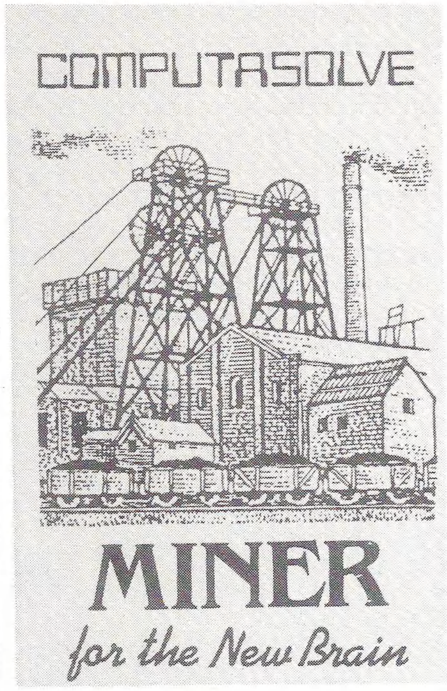
Newbrain
£8.50
Computasolve,
8 Central Parade,
St Marks Hill,
Surbiton,
Surrey KT6 4PJ.

Making an entertaining game without sound or colour in today's market is hard, so Newbrain users will be pleased to find both entertainment and educational qualities in this package.

The 19K of coding and interesting use of the low resolution graphics available in the Newbrain along with hardware editing facilities must add to the good value.

If you expect just "load" to work, it won't, so read the sparse but adequate instructions carefully. If it dosen't run without error, try adding a piece of code (FOR N = 1 to 255: CLOSE/N:NEXT N).

Miner itself is an enhanced form of Monopoly, in which you have to beat a target you set yourself in a time you set yourself and at a choice of three speeds.



You are given mine workings at the start of the game and the opportunity to add to these, as well as transport facilities to get the units of production from the mine to a wharf and then warehouse.

The value of the units increases depending on their location, but in moving them by lorry, barge or ship you incur the random possibility of piracy, accident and disaster. As your funds increase by selling units, you can add more workings and transport to make your income mount up faster.

A.H.

Graphics	25%
Ease of Use	21%
Instructions	30%
Play it Again	17%
Value for Money	71%
Star Quality	★ ★

MINES OF SATURN/RETURN TO EARTH

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.95
Mikro-Gen,
24 Agar Crescent,
Bracknell,
Berkshire.

Two simple adventure-type programs on one cassette. The format of both is the same — a series of situations followed by the question "what will you do now?" — but the scenarios are slightly different.

In Mines of Saturn, you have to pick up "Di-Lithium Crystals" in order to refuel your spaceship, which has made a forced landing on Saturn.

Return to Earth is the sequel in which you have to find your way round a deserted earth Station to try and alert Earth of your predicament.

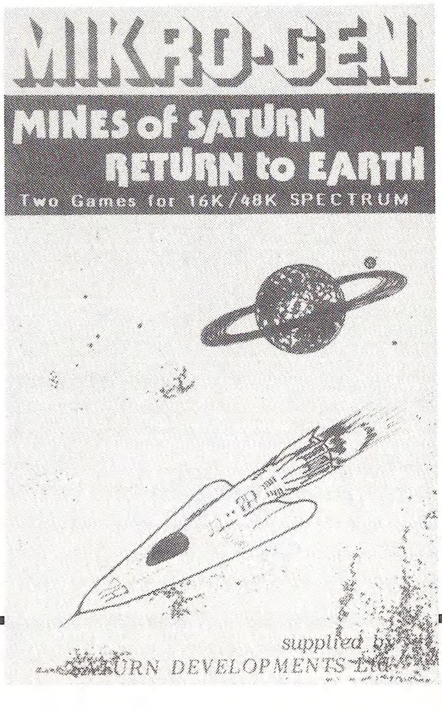
I was entertained by the display of my spacecraft and Saturn while the program was loading. Sadly, once the game proper had begun, that was the last I saw of them.

The program wouldn't accept a lot of my proposed solutions, but got full marks for politeness, responding with "pardon?" to suggestions it did not understand.

Though I found no bugs as such, there was some evidence of bad design. For example, at one point I was offered, and accepted, a boat, only to find that the only way to proceed was upwards! Well, it did say a *light* boat.

B.B.

Graphics	N/A
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★



MONACO GRAND PRIX

Sharp MZ-80K
£5.00
Knights Computers,
108 Rosemount Place,
Aberdeen.

No prizes for guessing what this game is about. You have to steer your Sharp symbol of a car through a track filled with other Sharp symbols of a car, all moving slower than you are.

The idea is to keep going as long as possible, without running up the exhaust pipe of one of the others. The Sharp keeps score of how you're doing and writes up rude messages if you aren't doing very well.

The only controls are left, right and speed. There are five levels of difficulty and each one puts more cars on the track and moves you quicker towards them. The race track twists and winds, changing width rasticaly as it goes and for a final killer, there are tunnels to navigate! Once in one of these your car's headlights come on and all you can see is what appears in the cone of light produced by them. Time to react is thus dramatically reduced and crashing is almost inevitable. Not much fun.

Overall not a bad race game, but limited as all these types are. After all, there are only so many ways of running into something! Good fun for a while though and handy to have around for passing the odd minute or six.

R.H.

Graphics	62%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	15%
Play it Again	71%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

3-D MONSTER MAZE

ZX81 (16K)
£5.95
JK Greye Enterprises
16 Park Street,
Bath,
Avon BA1 2TE.

If I had to choose just one program to impress an audience with the capabilities of the ZX81, then J K Greye's '3-D Monster Maze' would be the one without a doubt. Written mainly in machine code, this 9½K game includes graphics which had me checking that the program was really being run on a ZX81, rather than one of the micros that measure their price, as well as their memory, in Ks.

The impressive features of this program start even before the game itself begins. A cleverly-drawn clown announces the instructions which scroll up the right-hand side of the screen. The clown even doffs his hat (although I must admit that at first I thought his head has fallen off, even these graphics have some limitations). Any program which can liven up the presentation of the instructions has to have a lot going for it.

The ZX81 goes into FAST mode to set up the maze, and when it is complete, you are given an excellent 3-D representation. All walls are shaded and passages to the left and right can be seen clearly quite a way ahead. Keys 5, 7 and 8 are used to turn left, go forward and turn right, and the response is instantaneous. There is a real sense of motion through the maze if you keep your finger on 'forward'. Having played a couple of very slow 3-D mazes written in BASIC, this program would have been streets ahead . . .if it wasn't for Rex.

Rex is the unfriendly neighbourhood dinosaur who inhabits the maze. You only score points when he is chasing you . . .or when you find the exit. . .so this is no game for the faint-hearted. You are told if he is getting close, although if you're lucky (?) you'll see him lumbering towards you, getting bigger and bigger, the jaws opening wider and wider. Even after playing the game many times, the sight of him still makes me jump. Truly the stuff of nightmares. The graphics are incredible and I found I had to copy the screen to a printer to prove to myself that these amazing pictures were made up from the standard Sinclair character set.

So the graphics are great, but how good is it as a game? I'm pleased to be able to say that it is very good indeed. There is on-screen scoring as you move around, plus bonus points if you find the exit, which involves yet more graphics effects. The exit is a moving kaleidoscope of letters and symbols which grows as you approach it. But beware of being hypnotised by it, as Rex is always close by to wake you up.

If you find the exit, a new maze is created and your score is carried forward. If you do happen to end up in Tyranno's tummy, you get the opportunity to start again with the same maze, so you can build up your chances of escape.

With such a professional standard of presentation maintained throughout the program, it deserves to do very well indeed. I certainly haven't seen anything like it before, but I hope it is just the start of 'realistic' graphics games for the ZX81.

P.G.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

MONSTER MINE

Dragon 32
£6.91
Gem Software,
Unit D,
The Maltings,
Station Road,
Sawbridgeworth,
Hertfordshire.

An original game in which you attempt to reach the top of the screen, avoiding the monsters which guard the path you must take. At the same time, you have to eat as many pound signs (worth £100 each) as you can within the time limit.

Very easy to play, with some nice touches: for example, the program asks for your name and then prints messages using it. For controls you use the arrow keys. The Enter key can also be used just once in each game as a panic button: press it when you are just about to be eaten, and you will be whisked to the nearest doorway between the corridor you are in and the one below.

Since the highest resolution graphics are used, no colour is available, but I didn't find that this detracted from the game. Monster Mine is addictive and enjoyable, suitable for almost any age.

D.W.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	95%
Value for Money	100%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

MONSTERS

BBC Micro (32K)
£9.95
Acornsoft,
4A Market Hill,
Cambridge CB2 3NJ.

This program is one of the series of arcade quality games that have been released by Acornsoft for the BBC computers. When they say 'arcade' they really mean it, the quality of the game is stunning and it shines out amongst the other software that certain people would have us believe is straight out of the arcade.

The game is based around the perils of a man trapped in a labyrinth of ladders and walls with only ferocious monsters for company. To defend himself he digs holes through the walls and then smashes the monsters through to certain death if they perchance to stumble in. To make matters worse he has a constantly decreasing oxygen supply to contend with as well.

As the game progresses he has more and varied monsters to battle with and the promise of greater rewards for completing the screen. Once you have mastered the art of staying alive then you can adopt a more stylish form of play by digging holes one underneath each other and thus collecting more points as the creatures fall through many floors before splattering. This technique also stands you in good stead for later parts of the game where you have super monsters that require dropping through two or three levels before they die.

This is an excellent game that should be a welcome addition to anyone's software library. It even includes a top 10 score table to allow you to display your prowess to your friends.

C.P.

Graphics	92%
Ease of Use	52%
Instructions	78%
Play it Again	79%
Value for Money	72%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

MOONS OF JUPITER

VIC-20 (+3K)
£9.99
Romik Software,
24 Church Street,
Slough SL1 1PT.

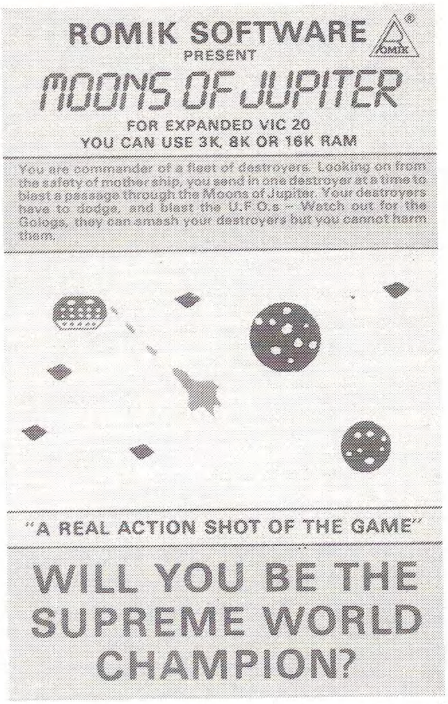
From time to time a real gem of a program emerges from the mass of software on sale, and this is one. In spite of its name, Moons of Jupiter is an excellent version of the old favourite Asteroids.

To the uninitiated, the idea of the game is to pilot a small space ship in the middle of a swarm of asteroids. Using the ship's cannon, you must destroy the asteroids and survive.

As you shoot the asteroids, they break up into smaller, faster moving, rocks. When you have cleared the screen of all debris, you get a new screen full to shoot at.

The ship's controls enable you to rotate the ship to the left and right and to move forwards. Your score simply depends on how many asteroids you destroy.

In Moons of Jupiter, the asteroids are beautifully drawn 'moons' which move smoothly across a screen which is larger than that on the normal VIC-20.



ROMIK SOFTWARE
PRESENT
MOONS OF JUPITER
FOR EXPANDED VIC 20
YOU CAN USE 3K, 8K OR 16K RAM

You are commander of a fleet of destroyers. Looking on from the safety of mother ship, you send in one destroyer at a time to blast a passage through the Moons of Jupiter. Your destroyers have to dodge, and blast the U.F.O.s – Watch out for the Gologs, they can smash your destroyers but you cannot harm them.

"A REAL ACTION SHOT OF THE GAME"

WILL YOU BE THE SUPREME WORLD CHAMPION?

All animation is superb, without the faintest trace of jerkiness.

The ship moves very realistically with just a touch of inertia to make life difficult, and can be controlled from the keyboard or by a joystick, an option which more software authors should use.

The game offers three levels of difficulty and is very challenging. Occasionally nasty little objects called Gologs appear on the screen. You can destroy them, but I won't tell you how.

Overall, a superb game which any Asteroids addict should obtain without delay.

A.W.

Graphics	91%
Ease of Use	85%
Instructions	78%
Play it Again	77%
Value for Money	85%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

MUNCHEES

ZX81 (16K)
£3.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton.

Nowadays I feel reluctant to spend evenings with Pacman or his close relations. So on learning that Munchees inhabit the corridors of a house, dodging ghosts and eating power pills, I set off to meet them without much enthusiasm.

First approaches revealed that their diet wasn't restricted to pills: they'd nibbled part of the program title away, and completely gobbled up the advertised game instructions. Tentative prods at the cursor keys, however, elicited a ground plan of the house, and the option to tackel up to four ghosts.

After that, things became fairly predictable. Each game comprised three plays, 10 points being scored per pill, with bonus plays for clearing all pills from a screen.

The house had a pair of side entrances, bonus fruit appeared fleetingly below the central room, and the ghosts (letter As) and the Munchees (letter O) trotted around at a steadily increasing pace. Unfortunately, a reload was needed to change the number of ghosts.

Minor flaws aside, Munchees seemed reliable if unoriginal. Its main attraction is price: all but one of the current rivals I know of cost rather more. But some of them do have extra features for varying the game.

C.C.

Graphics	50%
Ease of Use	50%
Instructions	10%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	65%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

MUNCHER

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.95
Silversoft,
20 Orange Street
London WC2H 7ED.

Another Pacman-type game in which you try to avoid four ghosts by running round a maze. The only unusual feature in this otherwise standard version is that the maze pattern varies each time it is drawn.

Each time you clear the energy dots and redraw the maze, you and the ghosts speed up. A bonus fruit materialises from time to time in the centre of the maze . . .munch it if you can, the extra points are worth the trouble!

The program loaded every time and the difficulty levels progress smoothly, so that even a newcomer to the game can get some feeling of achievement. A high score is recorded, but not the name of the high-scoring player.

Muncher is let down by its instructions, which give the wrong control keys: S starts a new game, not 5, and M, not N, moves you down.

Fair graphics, especially considering how small the ghosts etc are. An addictive game, and a good introduction to the 'race, chase and gobble' brigade. But with so many similar games on the market, I would have liked to see more variety and imagination.

P.F.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	50%
Play it Again	85%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

MYRIAD

VIC-20 (+3K)
£9.99
Rabbit Software,
380 Station Road,
Harrow,
Middlesex.

Myriad is a machine code space game created by Steve Clark which has an almost unbelievable 200 levels and depends to a great amount on the speed of your reflexes. Be fast and add up a high score, slow and you fail. The sheer numbers of hazards and situations directly increases as you advance from the lowest possible level where there are only five of each hazard. As you increase in steps of 0.1 to 2.1 level, the number of problems doubles and at level 6.1, or 60 in real terms, you have 25 of each hazard.

At this level the builder enters the scene and logically drops bricks. As you increase in skills the number of builders and bricks increases in proportion. Once you get keener and reach level 15 you find the viruses which at first appear quite harmless. This is because they don't kill you right away. Their effect is cumulative needing three of them to finally finish you off.

The pods flying across the screen have builders that drop bricks, and bombs which can be worth between 100-500 points and viruses. Most dangerous of all are the reflectors where you run the risk of having your own power reflected back at you. This is often a fatal mistake.

But on your side you have shields which last a whole 4.5 seconds.

You are given three of them for every 10,000 points. You start off with three lives and nine shields which you activate with the Space bar. And if this isn't enough completely at random you have the extra hazards of asteroid and meteorite storms.

Myriad is an extremely fast moving machine code game making excellent use of the graphics, with a maximum level that will take a long time to reach. You have the choice of joystick or keyboard operation. Using the keyboard A is for left, D for right, S for fire F1 up and F2 down, with the Space bar for your shields. I preferred to use the joystick as it seemed more responsive.

The people who distribute the game have only reached around level 6.1 (61), so you can see that this game will give you many goals to reach. And as you reach each higher level, you must be even quicker to survive.

Myriad will give lots of enjoyment for a long time. I thought it was an ordinary game when I started, but after half an hour it became compulsive and then I had only reached 4.1. Highly recommended.

N.A.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	68%
Instructions	58%
Play it Again	77%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

N

NIGHTCRAWLER

VIC-20 (unexpanded)
£9.99
Rabbit Software,
380 Station Road,
Harrow,
Middlesex HA1 2DE.

A fast-action version of Centipede . . . and I mean really fast.

You are in the Green Forest where lurk strange and formidable creatures. Your job is to destroy the Nightcrawler by chopping it up into small pieces.

It seems simple, until you find there are no less than 39 different levels. So to progress to the level of master – if you ever do – takes a lot of practice with keyboard or joystick. And while you are trying to kill the Nightcrawler a Pacman-type figure appears on the screen trying to do the same.

For a game where your reactions must be lightning fast, this has few equals.

It's quite easy to score at the lowest level. But to reach the highest level was beyond me, although I tried for hours. Still, it's a challenge worth taking up.

P.R.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

NIGHTMARE PARK

ZX81 (16K)
£4.95
Macronics,
26 Spiers Close,
Knowle,
Solihull,
West Midlands B93 9ES.

An adventure (!) game with a difference. You merely have to walk from one end of the park to the other . . . well I suppose someone might have got there, but it's really surprising that one can move anywhere for all those dead bodies!

Every few steps the screen display showing the plan of the park disappears and you know your life is in the balance again. It might be a plague of zombies or muggers, from which you can only escape if you guess the right number before they get to you, or it might be an egotistical ogre who wants you to type in his name. Oh yes, he did flash it on the screen somewhere for all of a tenth of a second . . . was that when you blinked? Alternatively you might be asked the sum of about nine numbers (you have ten seconds to answer) or . . .

A very interesting game that I think could become quite addictive providing you have the right masochistic tendencies. I personally (I have to stress it's my opinion not the entire editorial staff, you see!) that the game could be made a lot more attractive to all the family if:

1) you could adjust the timing of some of the brief clues that are given (make them visible for longer for us old bifocal foggies).
2) If you had a graphic representation of your life forces gradually diminishing rather than the all too regular "HA,HA . . . YOU'RE DEAD" type message.

With these mods I'm sure you would still fade away before you got to the finishing straight, but you would at least feel slightly more satisfied. A good idea – well presented – but a little too quick to terminate!

P.F.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

THE NOWOTNIK PUZZLE AND OTHER DIVERSIONS

ZX81 (+ expansion)
£5.00
Phipps Associates,
Mail Order Department,
99 East Street,
Epsom,
Surrey.

If you're bored with that dratted Rubik cube, then the Nowotnik puzzle is an original concept in computer games that might be just the thing for you. The chances are you'll be tearing out your hair in handfuls trying to solve the puzzle at the simplest level of play, knowing that there are four progressively harder levels to move onto if you ever do manage to get it worked out. "Easy — it's only two dimensional", I hear you say, as I myself commented — until, that is, I had seen the pieces shuffled and attempted a few exploratory moves. It is indeed a puzzle of merely two dimensions, but don't be under the misapprehension that it is, therefore, a doddle.

At the beginning, and when (and if!) completed, the puzzle is in the form of four large squares. These squares are shuffled by the computer using a random selection of eight possible movements. The problem is then to use these eight movements to get back the four squares in their original layout. At the simplest level, each of the four large squares is broken up into four by the shuffle, giving 16 smaller squares; at the hardest level, the four squares are each divided into 144 elements, giving a total of 576 elements altogether!

If you complete the puzzle, you are told the number of moves taken, and there is a game save facility so that a partly completed puzzle can be continued, and hopefully finished, later. I would have liked an option to reduce the number of shuffles so that some logical method of solution could be developed by trial and error during the first few tries; the sight of a well-shuffled puzzle on the first attempt is itself rather daunting.

The person who has mastered the magic cube will have a head start in tackling the Nowotnik puzle. Conceptually, the problem is similar; it is relatively easy to complete one square, or face, but it is solving the whole puzzle without ruining those squares, or faces, already completed that is so infuriatingly difficult.

A very addictive game, and as is so often the case with this kind of competition of self versus the computer, it is very hard to admit defeat and one tends to persist, thinking that a few more moves will have it cracked. Perhaps it is fortunate that the ZX81 is less portable than the cube, otherwise it would undoubtedly make its appearance at parties with the nonchalent admission, by devotees, of the number of moves or time taken to solve the puzzle.

A DYNAMIC DUO

Two other games, routine in comparison to the puzzle but nonetheless absorbing, complete this cassette and make it good value for money.

In Demolition, a wall appears at the bottom of the screen and the object is to knock down as many bricks as possible using a '★' fired repeatedly at the wall. There is a catch — the wall moves upwards at a slightly faster rate than you can knock bricks out, and also more walls appear; eventually the game ends when a wall reaches the top of the screen. Points are awarded for each brick removed, and the total for the game is displayed so that a competition between a number of players can be held. A fast moving interactive game and completely idiot proof — my four year old daughter played for about an hour without managing to crash the program!

Finally, Tenpin simulates a standard game of 10-ten bowling. The alley is displayed at the top of the screen, with score cards for either one or two players displayed below. The game is played over 10 frames. When bowling, you indicate the strength of delivery; a stronger delivery is less accurate but increases the number of pins which fall if you make a hit. Not being a 10-pin bowling afficionado, I was intrigued by the scoring which apparently is true to life and is coupled with 'strikes' and 'spares'. The graphics are fair; the ball disappears when it hits the pins and the effect as the pins fall and also disappear is rather disconcerting. Nonetheless, a novel simulation to complete the package.

All the games on this cassette require a ZX81 with more than 1K, and each program is duplicated on the reverse side. The programs can all be LISTed, and instructions for making security copies are given. Dr. David Nowotnik, the author of the three programs, is a member of the Aylesbury Computer Club.

N.P.

Graphics	45%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	75%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★

OCEAN TRADER

ZX81 (16K)
£3.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton SO1 1LL.

This is a very enjoyable game, and if you are not careful you could find yourself becoming quite an addict! You are the captain and owner of a 19th century vessel, trading between five British ports; your aim, of course, is to end up showing a profit, but this is easier said than done.

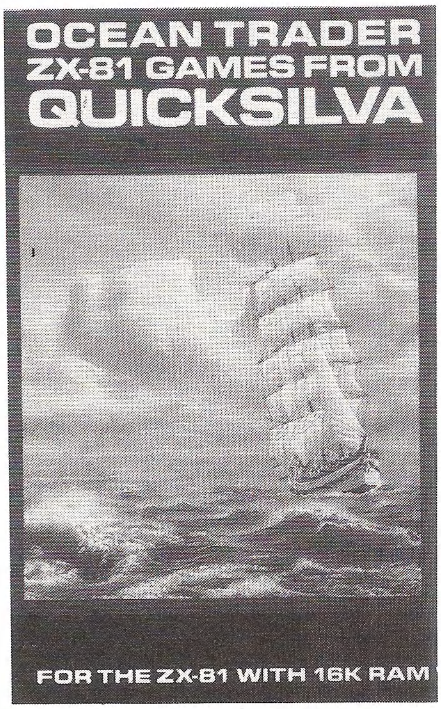
You have the option of dealing in five different types of cargo — general, arms, coal, whiskey and bullion; as you go from port to port you will find the current prices for each of these varying in an unpredictable manner.

To help matters you may borrow money from a finance company in your home port, but beware — the interest mounts up alarmingly! And, of course, there are all sorts of hazards which may beset your seafaring expeditions — pirates, storms and fog to name three.

Maybe you will overcome these; if not, you may lose some or all of your cargo and end up without a penny to your name. And if you take a chance and ship an illegal cargo, watch out for the pitfalls . . .

All the details you need to have at hand are displayed on screen, for example, your bank balance; how much you owe the finance company; how many units of each cargo you have, etc.

Options are displayed below (Do you want to buy or sell? What type of goods? Which



destination do you choose for your next voyage?) and it is quite alarming to find out how easy it is to lose everything. Of course, it is possible to make a bundle quickly, with luck, but you will have to play the game to find out how!

The instructions are loaded first from the tape (as they are quite involved, they are not printed on the cassette insert,) and are accompanied by attractive graphics. After you have studied them you can load the main program.

I had no trouble at all loading and running this game, and found it clear and well-produced. Unlike some games, this one really makes you think before you risk all your wordly goods!

I particularly enjoyed some of the remarks that accompanied the news that I had 'lost' my ship — humour can soften the hardest blow. All in all, I think this game is well worth buying.

C.C.-R.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	85%
Value for Money	95%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★ ★

ORBITER

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.95
Silversoft,
20 Orange Street,
London WC2H 7ED.

Immediately recognisable as a version of the popular Defender arcade game, Orbiter incorporates many of the features of the original, such as Landers, Mutants, and the small scale display of the overall battle area.

Since these features are not mentioned in the brief instructions, it was only after consultation with a confirmed Defender fan that the full scope of the game was understood.

It then emerged as a quite entertaining, if slightly frustrating game, notably in the fact that the score message kept changing colour, and in some colours was quite unreadable.

The Defender fan remarked that it was difficult, if not impossible, to position the defending ship so that attacks from the rear could be detected in time to take evasive action, but that could be seen as part of the fun.

The program loaded without difficulty, though the instruction to CLEAR 25102 before loading was a little surprising, not being needed with other machine code programs. Seven control functions were available, each controllable by a separate group of keys in the keyboard matrix.

Basically a good game, which would nevertheless benefit from slight revisions and an adequate explanation.

D.T.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	50%
Instructions	40%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★

OTHELLO

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.95
CDS Micro Systems
10 Westfield Close,
Tickhill,
Doncaster,
South Yorkshire DN11 9LA.

There are many versions of the boardgame Othello or Reversi around and this is a fairly standard one. The aim is to capture as many squares as possible by placing pieces and turning over your opponent's.

You have three options: playing against the computer, playing another person or watching the computer play itself, and you can choose either the black or white pieces.

There's not much fun in watching the computer play (except to learn tactics), with about 20 seconds delay between moves, and there's not much point in buying the game if you are mainly going to play against another person, so the value of this game lies in the ability of the computer opponent. I found the algorithm used very difficult to beat. I suspect that it has been adapted from another machine, as at one point it tells you to press Return — but of course the ZX Spectrum hasn't got a Return key.

The instructions are clear but could have been laid out in a more readable fashion. Play is easy: you simply enter a two-digit grid reference and the computer will place your piece there if it is a legal move. If you think you cannot move, entering 00 causes the computer to check and to suggest a move if one is available.

N.W.

Graphics	85%
Ease of Use	90%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★

P

PAINTER

ATOM (8K), ZX Spectrum (48K)
£6.90 (£5.75 for ZX Spectrum)
A & F Software,
10 Wilpshire Avenue,
Longsight,
Manchester.

This is a version of the arcade game 'Amidar' which, I must confess, I've never come across. The object is to fill in a grid of cells. This you do by moving your man — a painter in this version — around the perimeter of each cell and, when you have been around all four sides, the cell is painted in with a colour. However, you are being pursued by the 'Blue Meanies' — here represented by blue squares — who do their best to knock you off the grid.

This version runs in 4K and uses an additional 3K for the colour graphics. The game runs immediately upon loading and you start with 3 meanies and 4 painters. Five keys are used, so you need a degree of dexterity, but these have been chosen sensibly and you soon get used to them. Four keys control movement and the fifth key allows you to get out of a tight corner by jumping over an approaching meanie — however, you can only do this in the horizontal plane and you must be careful not to jump off the edge of the grid or, not unnaturally, you fall to your death!

The score, and the number of painters left, is shown at the bottom of the screen. If you manage to fill a screenful, you get another screen with an extra painter — and an extra meanie! The version supplied had no provision for a high-score, which is a pity as this is a very tricky game!

The animation is superb, with moving arms and legs. Whenever you reach the top of the screen, you also get a smart salute! If your painter is knocked off, he falls to the bottom of the screen and assumes a 'dead' posture, with arms and legs in the air, while the 'Death March' is played! Filling a screen rewards you with a salute and a fanfare. Instructions are supplied on a separate sheet and are up to standard. As usual, A & F provide an 'Index' routine at the beginning of the tape to help setting up.

In conclusion, an appealing game, by no means as easy as it appears, with good use of sound and fine animation. The ladies will enjoy this one and the kids at my local computer club had to be dragged off it!

J.P.

Graphics	92%
Ease of Use	77%
Instructions	30%
Play it Again	92%
Value for Money	82%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

PATIENCE

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.99
Haven Hardware,
4 Asby Road,
Asby,
Workington,
Cumbria.

It has always puzzled me why people write computer simulations of games such as Patience, when they can be so easily played with an ordinary, ultra-low technology pack of cards.

In the computer version, I suppose, you don't have to shuffle the cards; and in the case of this game it's also impossible to cheat, since the computer's error checking is very thorough.

Haven Hardware's version takes one of the better-known patience games, in which the player must transfer all the cards of each suit to the appropriate piles in ascending order, aces at the bottom.

After shuffling, the cards are shown on the screen, set out in the time-honoured fashion of a right-angled triangle with a base seven cards long. Cards are then taken from the pack and placed on this triangle in descending order and alternating black and red.

I.O.

Graphics	40%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	20%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

PENETRATOR

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£6.95
Melbourne House,
131 Trafalgar Road,
Greenwich,
London SE10.

So you thought you could play 'Scramble' type games? Well this program may change your mind. Penetrator is DIFFICULT to do well at and well-nigh IMPOSSIBLE to defeat. That's the beauty of the game, however, almost impossible, but NOT QUITE . . .

The graphics are superb. The radar bases are endowed with 3-D revolving dishes and the ground-to-air missiles come complete with burning exhaust fumes. (Never mind, its probably an airless world we're battling on. Let's not be churlish, shall we?)

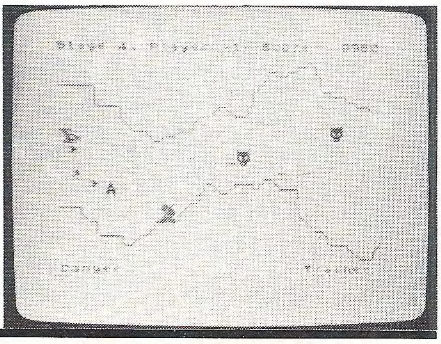
There are four levels to contend with, before you reach your target on the fifth — a neutron bomb store, no less. In order to destroy it you must release two bombs down a vertical shaft to hit two very small targets. Miss even one and your harrowing trip through the tunnels has been for nothing. There is no way out as the cave narrows rapidly to nothing . . . and it's goodnight from him.

If you succeed in hitting both targets, the program goes into a quick spasm of pyrotechnics and then turns your ship around to start out again . . .

In addition to the basic game there is a training facility provided (which you'll need) and this allows you to practise any of the levels with unlimited lives. The instructions don't tell you this, but you can go straight into level five and practise hitting the bomb store. The programmer wants you to earn that bomb-run with blood.

Another special feature allows you to customise your own landscape to fly through — and provides your radar defences and missiles. Great fun this — a must for all masochists and suicidal maniacs.

I have only two criticisms of Penetrator, both concerned with the controls you have to use to wreak havoc and cause carnage. Your laser is operated by the same key as the 'accelerate' facility.



Hold it down a fraction too long and instead of shooting out a menacing missile your flyer takes a decidely Kamikaze view of life and accelerates straight into it. Cute, that.

In addition the controls are ideally placed — for an ambidextrous octopus. The rest of us semi-sentient species will have trouble getting used to them. A great game nonetheless and probably ***the*** version of this particular arcade game.

C.P.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	60°o
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	85%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

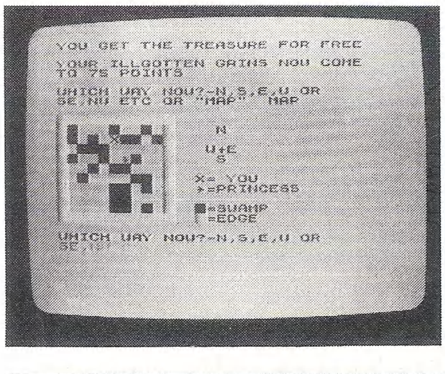
PERILOUS SWAMP/ SORCERERS

ZX81 (16K)
£4.75
Sinclair Research,
Stanhope Road,
Camberley,
Surrey GU15 3PS.

Trapped in a swampy forest, dark slimy reeds surround you, deep black tar pits scattered in your path and many hideous creatures waiting in the shadows.

This is the scene that unfolds in front of you as you start the Perilous Swamp adventure. The tape has two adventures on it that run in the ZX81 with 16K memory expansion.

The adventures follow a fairly standard format, where you give the computer instructions how to move about the game map and the computer responds by giving you details of your surroundings, location, what treasure is there and what you have to do to take it. If you encounter a monster then you are given the option of fighting, running or bribing the creature to gain your freedom, or the treasure.



```
YOU GET THE TREASURE FOR FREE

YOUR ILLGOTTEN GAINS NOW COME
TO 75 POINTS

WHICH WAY NOW?-N,S,E,W OR
SE,NW ETC OR "MAP" MAP

                 N

                W+E
                 S

                X= YOU
                *=PRINCESS

                █=SWAMP
                ▏=EDGE

WHICH WAY NOW?-N,S,E,W OR
SE,NW
```

If you choose to fight then you are asked to pit a certain amount of strength points in the battle. The computer will then fight the battle with you and display the outcome. It is best to leave the bribery option till later in the game when you are low on combat points. However, if you feel that you don't stand a chance you can try and run, which, if you are quick enough will save you.

The game is fun to play even with the limitations of the computer, which seems unfairly biased to the monsters. As you leave the swamp it shows your score in terms of how many righteous monsters died guarding treasure which was rightfully theirs.

C.P.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

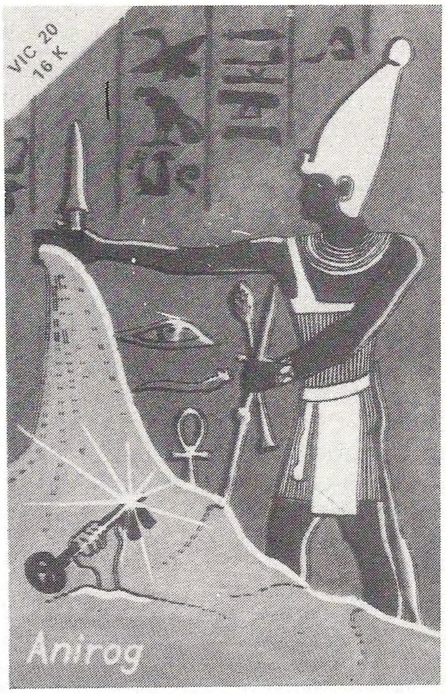
PHAROAH'S TOMB

VIC-20 (+16K)
£6.00
Anirog,
26 Balcombe Gardens,
Horley,
Surrey.

This is a purely graphical adventure, in which you use the keyboard to control a little man who searches a pyramid for various objects.

His quest takes him into a series of maze-type screens in which are various nasties who delight in sapping his strength. Instant death also lurks in the form of different traps.

Many adventures are criticised for the use of text only. I must criticise this game for the converse — the only time text is used is when your death is announced. I would have liked to have seen simple messages telling you what the objects were and what they could do for you. Secondly, whereas in most adventures you can anticipate a hazard and sometimes avoid it, in Pharoah's Tomb you are liable to be bumped off at any time. Instant death without warning is so frustrating — especially when you have a long game to reload.



Very good multicolour mode graphics, but overall a rather frustrating and unsatisfying game.

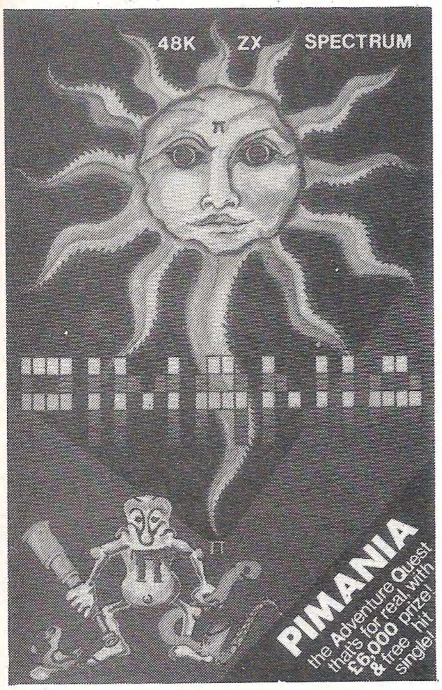
A.W.

Graphics	68%
Ease of Use	58%
Instructions	45%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	50%
Star Quality ★ ★	

PIMANIA

Dragon 32, ZX Spectrum (48K)
£10.00
Automata Ltd,
65A Osborne Road,
Portsmouth PO5 3LR.

Your quest in this adventure game is to hunt through time and space for the Golden Sundial of Pi. But watch out for the Pi Man — he may not be all he seems!


48K ZX SPECTRUM
PIMANIA
the Adventure Quest that's for real with £6,000 prize! & free hit single!

A new twist to this game is that the object of your quest actually exists. If you can work out the overall meaning of the game, you could win the real Sundial, made of gold and diamonds and valued at £6,000.

And as well as the program, the Pimania cassette also contains the Pimania theme tune, sung by the strangely familiar Clair Sinclive and the Pi-Men.

These frills aside, rich use of colour graphics and music is the first thing you notice about Pimania. The text is also neatly presented, within the constraints of the Dragon's display.

But though the animation and "full musical score" are quite fun for a while, they soon begin to pall because of the inadequacies of the game itself.

Compared with other adventure games, Pimania has very few (about 20) different places to explore. I found the Pi-Man's requests (invariably accompanied by an irritating bit of music) absurd. And the program can only understand the simplest of instructions.

However, the program loaded first time, and adequate running instructions are supplied. Instructions on how to play are another matter — here you are left in the dark.

Nice gimmicks — shame about the game.

G.M.P.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	40%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

PIONEER TRAIL

ZX81 (16K)
£3.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton.

Billed as a 'Mind Game', Pioneer Trail is set in America in 1847. Your objective is to travel the 2,000 miles from Missouri to Oregon, but your funds are limited, and there are sundry hazards to hinder you.

Your control over the game is mainly in making constant decisions on whether to stop and stock up with more food, clothes, supplies and what have you. Too little and you starve/freeze/die of snakebite for lack of serum. Too much and you risk losing the lot in a buffalo stampede.

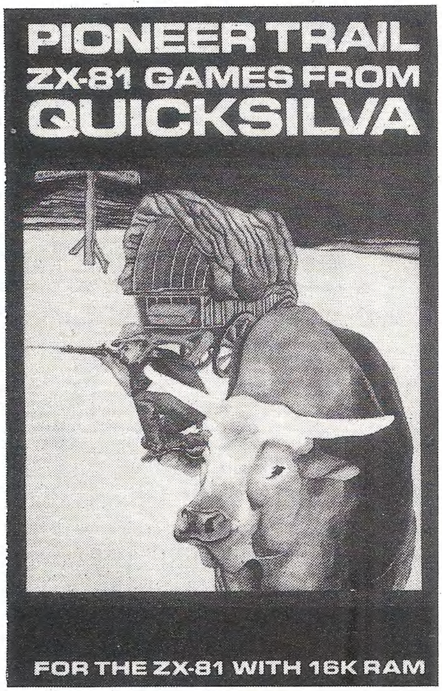
Apart from that, the game pretty much carries on without you.

For example, "You see travellers in the distance", announces the screen. "They look hostile. Do you want to fight/run/build a barricade/continue?" Don't fret too much about which to choose — it makes no difference.

Unless you choose to fight — in which case you get into a shooting match.

What you have to do in these is press, as fast as you can, the key corresponding to the letter/number moving across the screen. When it comes to telling ZX81's S from 5, or Q from zero, it's mainly a test of how well you've adjusted the TV. I found I could do quite badly at this and still be told: "Good shooting. You scared them off".

Worse still are the little messages that flash up. "Rattlesnake!" it says. Then before you've had a chance to finish reading the message, let alone do anything else, it announces "You killed it". Who me?



Never being good at balancing my budget at the best of times, I invariably starved to death after 900 miles or so, whichever of the 20 levels I played on.

C.G.

Graphics	20%
Ease of Use	50%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	45%
Star Quality ★ ★	

PLANET INVASION

Dragon 32
£7.95
Microdeal,
41 Truro Road,
St. Austell,
Cornwall PL25 5JE.

This fast machine code version of Defender requires a joystick to control the elevation and forward/reverse speed of the space ship.

There are two versions of this game on the cassette: one in the highest resolution and therefore in black and buff and the other which allows for a display in more varied colour. There was little loss of quality in the coloured version, which I preferred as it made identification of the different forms of invader easier.

Your mission is to protect the Caloxin crystals from the Praetorian Invaders. Other hazards hit you from all directions as you fly around by the seat of your pants dodging, diving and dealing out death.

This was a very fast game that required split-second timing — very close to the arcade version. The sound effects, explosions and splintering fragments added greatly to the overall quality of presentation.

My eight-year-old son retained the highest score, standing at 12,000 points, and my 7,000 looked pretty meagre by comparison. Very entertaining and highly motivating: if you like arcade games, buy it.

M.P.

Graphics	100%
Ease of Use	90%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	90%
Value for Money	90%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

PLANET OF DEATH

ZX81 (16K)
£5.00
Artic Computing,
396 James Reckitt Avenue,
Hull HU8 0JA.

This game, adventure A on Artic's list, follows the traditional adventure format. It does not use graphics. At the start of the game and after moving, the screen is cleared and a text description of your location, objects and obvious exits is displayed. You enter your instruction — usually two words like 'get rope' — and the program will recognise N, S, W or E for directions. The computer responds instantly, usually YOU CAN'T to my instructions.

The tape loaded at the third attempt. I noted the volume setting on my cassette player and subsequent loadings were perfect. The instructions are deliberately vague but the program offers a few hints. It says there are more than 100 commands; I think I've found about 20. Typing HELP may get you a cryptic clue, but more often an infuriatingly unhelpful message.

I loved this game. The satisfaction I felt on solving a simple problem was great. When, and if, I complete it I'll celebrate wildly.

The task set by the game is to find your captured and disabled spaceship and escape from the alien planet. I found one spelling mistake — a bared window — but with these games it might be significant. I spent ages thinking of possible implications. Or was it just an error?

R.E.

Graphics	—
Ease of Use	90%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	90%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

PLANETOIDS

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£4.95
Psion,
Stanhope Road,
Camberley,
Surrey, GU15 3PS.

Meteors, Asteroids, Planetoids . . . software companies are fast running out of synonyms for drifting space debris. In this version, twinkling stars form a backdrop to yellow planetoids, which pass by smoothly and quickly while you try to destroy them with softly clicking bullets. Sometimes a mystery ship appears.

sinclair
ZX Spectrum
PLANETOIDS
also MISSILE
SOFTWARE BY PSION
—16K or 48K RAM

Z and X control your rotation, Space is for firing, and Enter is for thrusting. You access hyperspace by pressing H, necessitating a sudden swipe at the centre of the keyboard in an emergency.

Your ship moves responsively in all directions, and the graphics are generally good and colourful, despite a disappointing explosion effect. The sound could be improved, though — and why is there no high score facility?

As for bugs — try hyperspacing while thrusting, or accelerating over the mystery ship's bullets (it's safe!). And a position of total safety can be found at the screen's edge.

There's a tedious and incomprehensible game called Missile on the other side of the tape.

Planetoids is an average adaptation of the arcade game, but Psion has not fully debugged it or presented it at its best.

C.L.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

POWER BLASTER

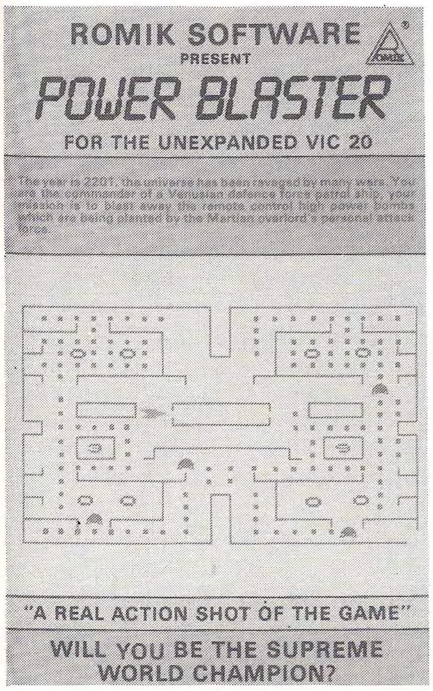
VIC-20 (unexpanded)
£9.99
Romik Software,
24 Church Street,
Slough,
Berkshire SL1 1PT.

Two classic arcade games, Space Invaders and Pacman, combined into one.

Your spaceship sits in a Pacman-like matrix surrounded by dots (mines) and pursued by Martians.

Instead of devouring the mines you have a highly effective laser which allows you to destroy whole rows of them for initially impressive scores.

I say initially impressive because as you progress through


ROMIK SOFTWARE
PRESENT
POWER BLASTER
FOR THE UNEXPANDED VIC 20
"A REAL ACTION SHOT OF THE GAME"
WILL YOU BE THE SUPREME WORLD CHAMPION?

the levels (1-9), the machine code speed of the program makes the higher stages extremely difficult, with frantic Martians chasing you for all they are worth.

I have shown Power Blaster to several people, whose reactions have confirmed my opinion that this is one of the best non-cartridge games I have yet seen for the unexpanded VIC-20.

Highly addictive, although very simple in concept and easy to play. Either keyboard or joystick can be used.

If I had to make a criticism of this game then it would have to be that, at £9.99, it is quite expensive. No more so, though, than many other VIC-20 games, which tend to cost more than programs for rival machines.

M.B.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	85%
Instructions	88%
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	68%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

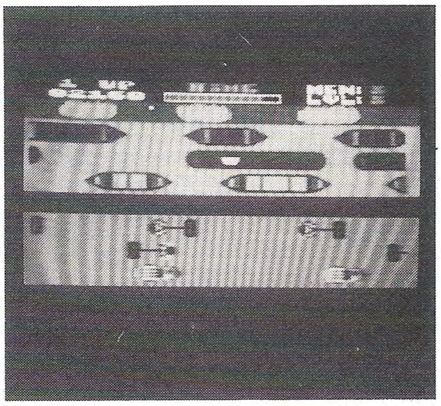
PREPPIE

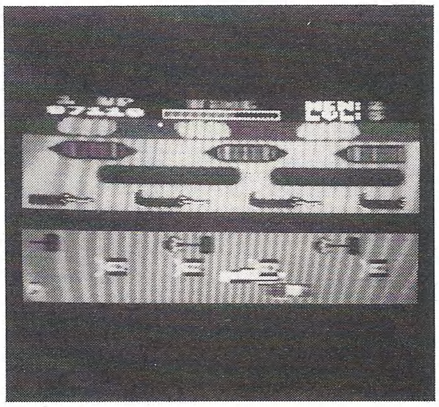
Atari (16K)
£17.95
Creative Software,
48 Hartlip Hill,
Newington,
Sittingbourne,
Kent ME9 7NZ.

It is not very often that you find a copy of a program that actually improves on the original but Preppie does this with flying colours.

Based on the pub game Frogger it gives the original an interesting twist by replacing the frogs with a small boy whose job it is to pick up lost golf balls on a golf course. To complete this task he has to cross the course and avoid various obstacles. On the lower levels these include people mowing the lawn, golf carts and barges sailing up and down a river which runs across the fairway. Once he has collected one ball then he has to return it to the safe green at the bottom of the screen.

As the game progresses the golf course takes on more of the appearance of an assault course with golf tractors replacing the lawn mowers and the river becoming populated with alligators whose eagerly open mouths can spell disaster for the novice Preppie. Also thrown in at higher levels are the odd wild cards like the killer frog which will splash you if you are too slow. As if this isn't enough, all this is carried out against the clock with your score being based on the number of balls you recover and the amount of time left.





This game goes a long way to establish the Atari as the premier games playing computer as it uses every facility that the machine offers to its fullest. This game is a must for anybody who wants to see the Atari driven to its fullest or is a little jaded after ridding the earth of countless space invaders.

C.P.

Graphics	93%
Ease of Use	91%
Instructions	89%
Play it Again	99%
Value for Money	98%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	

PRINT SHOP

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£5.00
Cases Computer Simulations,
14 Langton Way,
London SE3 7IL.

"You are the sole proprietor of a small print works, and your objective is to make a net profit of over £4000 in the first three months of trading". That's the challenge set by 'Print shop', a business simulation game from CCS.

You control your business by regularly deciding on numbers of staff, stock levels, production loading, and giving customers quotes on potential orders.

The computer gives you weekly Trading Accounts, and monthly profit/loss and cash flow sheets.

It also presents you with orders and acts as your competitor (quote too high a price and you lose the order). Friendly messages at the end of week tell you how you may improve your performance.

Full game instructions, with some hints, come with the program. These do not, however, include loading instructions. As the program recording level was low on the review tape, there were

ZX81 16K
PRINT SHOP
CCS SOFTWARE

problems in loading the program.

Business simulation games are not only meant to be fun, but educational too. This tape was both; I found very soon that despite having profitable dealings, you can still get cash flow problems.

There are some annoying features of the program. Some messages flash on and off the screen before you have the chance to read them carefully.

There are many facts to bear in mind (such as stock levels) while playing the game. It would have been useful to be able to look up these facts and ask 'what if?' questions in making decisions, demonstrating the power of the micro in real business situations.

But worst of all, at the end of a successful game; when fully expecting to be congratulated and have my healthy profit figure confirmed, the screen just went blank!

Nevertheless if you are a business student, or simply enjoy business games, 'Print Shop' is well worth a try.

D.N.

Graphics	50%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

PROTECTOR

BBC Micro (32K + Joystick)
£7.95
Quicksilva
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton SO1 1LL.

In this variation on an arcade classic, your task is to wield your laser to protect research units on an alien planet from monsters and mine-laying UFOs.

PROTECTOR
BBC GAMES FROM
QUICKSILVA
RUNS ON BBC MODEL B (32K)
WITH JOYSTICK

If you really get into trouble, you can give in and use the hyperspace function — and as the game progresses, your troubles increase.

There's an imaginative scenario to the game on the cassette insert, and instructions for play are given on screen. Control is by joystick only — you can't use the keyboard.

As well as making the best of the BBC's colour, graphics and sound. Protector has that element of 'just one more go' that will keep you playing it and maintain its popularity.

Well error-trapped and apparently bug-free, all in all a good, solid, enjoyable game. The only thing missing is a hall of fame feature — a pity, since it gives my children (and myself!) great satisfaction to see their names in lights.

R.E.

Graphics	87%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	62%
Play it Again	85%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

P.S.E. GAMES TAPE 3

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£4.95
PSE,
20 Shelton Avenue,
Newark,
Nottinghamshire.

On this tape are three games written by Steve McCarthy, some of which are up-grades of ZX81 games, whilst others are new. The games are as follows: 3D Noughts and Crosses, Towers of Brahm, Wipe-out and the flag ship of the pack, Astro-Wars.

3D OXO is an obvious game in which there is a four by four by four matrix in which it is necessary to get four in a row in any direction to coin. The only problem being that the layers are separated for display which takes away some of the effect. The computer itself is a pretty formidable opponent. Quite a well-presented thinking person's game.

Secondly, comes Towers of Brahm, the age old problem of getting five discs of ascending size from pin one to pin three. Though the principle is simple, the game is fast and colourful. This is an enjoyable game to play which is more addictive than you might at first expect. User-defined graphics could have been better used; this should not have slowed things down much if at all.

Wipe-Out is the final game on side A. The title seems to suggest that it may in some way be related to the hoards of space invader 'zap-zap' games, but far from it. This is a two player game, again putting an emphasis on thought. The computer draws a matrix board with its centre and corners made up of squares Xs and Os at the edges, and a grid reference system around it. The first symbol of each game to be 'wiped out' must be a square. Each successive grid reference thereafter specified must be immediately adjacent to the one previously 'wiped out' by either player. The object is to wipe out as many of either Xs or Os depending on which side you are on. This game is far from simple, though it would be greatly improved if it was possible to play the computer. Graphics are used very sparingly on this, but it is fun if you are into thinking games.

Finally, on side B we come to Astro-Wars which is a complete departure from side A in that it is a fast action, arcade game. It is an all machine code game in three stages based on the films 'Star Wars' and 'Empire Strikes Back'. The overall object being to score as many points as possible, but other objectives and hazards are generated on the way. In stage one you are looking out of your ship and into space and enemy aircraft are moving onto and around the screen. It is possible to destroy them via missiles and a sight which moves about the screen. A discrepancy which is noticeable pretty quickly is the fact that the rays of the missiles seem to go from the target to you, the ship, rather than ***vice versa.*** Whether or not you survive this, you are thrust into a long 3D tunnel in which missiles and other objects are projected at you in a 2D plane at the far end. Your task is to survive for six minutes until the Death Star comes into sight, at which time you must try to destroy it. Again, even if you fail on this stage you move onto the final stage, in which Imperial Walkers are coming at you in 3D and enemy aircraft are in the distance. They are both firing at you, which makes life very difficult indeed!

Overall, this game is easily the best on this package. The games are good but not excellent separately, though Astro-Wars is quite well-written. The documentation is very good and as a pack of four programs it is very good value indeed. I would recommend you to look out for any new stuff written by Steve McCarthy and Precision Engineering, as the quality is definitely improving at a fantastic rate. This tape can be recommended as good value for money.

J.W.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	65%
Value for Money	65%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

QIX

Atari (16K)
£29.95
Atari (UK),
Atari House,
Railway Terrace,
Slough SL2 5BZ.

When Qix first appeared in the pubs and arcades of Britain its radical deaparture from the standard video game format caused quite a stir. Here was a game which required both manual dexterity and a considerable degree of strategy.

The theme of the game is the capture of a roaming entity called Qix. The Qix is displayed as a multicoloured spark which moves around the screen. To capture the Qix you move your marker around the screen, laying a trail as you go. If you manage to completely enclose an area, either by joining up with one of your own lines or making it to the edge of the screen, the area is then shaded in and your score is increased by a factor of the percentage of the screen area you captured. Each phase ends when more than 75% of the screen has been captured.

To further hamper your progress you have to contend with two 'Sparx'. These luminous beasts move around the sides of the screen and along the lines which you draw. One touch from them and you lose one of your three lives. Finally there is the 'Fuse'. This only appears if you stop in the middle of drawing a line. It will follow your trail until it touches you and it's curtains again.

Your marker can move at two different speeds. The normal speed gives you blue areas when you complete a box and the slow speed gives you brown boxes, these are worth twice the normal value but you run a greater chance of being hit by the Qix when drawing them.

After you have successfully captured two Qixs the third screen provides you with two at the same time. If you manage to separate these your subsequent scores are doubled. Split them again and your scores are trebled.

If my memory serves me correctly, it was Atari who originally developed the arcade version of Qix on which this computer version is based. So I was a little disappointed when, on plugging in the cartridge, I was not greeted with the superb colour graphics which the arcade game sports.

Despite lacking the visual impact of its arcade brother, the game is more or less faithful to the original. It is superb entertainment which is guaranteed to have you fixed to your screen for many hours. A good buy.

C.P.

Graphics	56%
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	82%
Play it Again	74%
Value for Money	92%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

QS DEFENDA

ZX81 (16K)
£3.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton.

This version of the classic Defender arcade game gives you up to 84 moving characters on screen at one time. The display is remarkably fast and surprisingly smooth.

The game progesses at a hectic pace, with aliens, missiles, mutants and the rest steaming towards you and slowing down, only to be followed by another wave of nasties.

A novel 32 by 31 character display is used, and some readjustment of your set may be necessary. The insert and accompanying card list addresses which can be POKEd to alter the vertical and horizontal hold, and even the character height.

D.S.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

QS INVADERS

ZX81 (16K)
£3.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton.

This is a straightforward Space Invaders game for the ZX81, which can be used with or without the QS sound board and characters board.

It loads with no trouble and the instructions are clear and simple to follow.

Although there are long pauses in between each set, and at the end of each game, the controls work smoothly and efficiently. Sometimes too much so — the Base shoots from side to side so quickly that you need quite a delicate touch to stop it in the right place!

The bombs only fall from directly above the Base, and again they can move so fast as to be difficult to avoid. But that is all for the best, as this game, unlike arcade Space Invaders, does not have many variations.

There are three levels of play, ranging from a slow game scoring 10 points per invader to a fast one which scores 30 points per hit. A randomly generated 'saucer' also passes across the top of the screen for you to shoot down.

Provision has been made for functions such as scores per hit and bomb rate to be altered and the highest scorer can enter his name at the end of a game.

C.C-R.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	65%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

QS SCRAMBLE

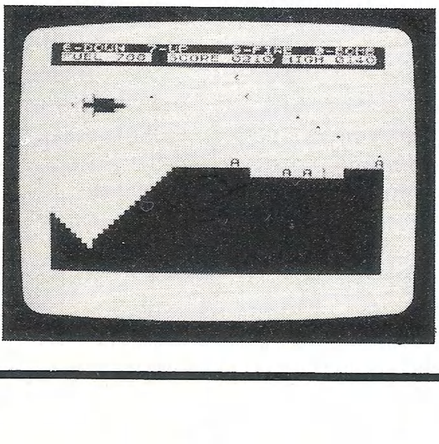
ZX81 (16K)
£3.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton.

Your ship is flying over the mountainous surface of a distant planet, under alien attack. You must avoid being shot down by the aliens, while bombing their fuel dumps and grounded rockets. If you miss, the rockets will take off to attack you; and all the time your fuel is running out . . .

The landscape and fuel dumps are randomly generated and pass from right to left across the screen. But as your own ship remains on the left hand side and only moves up and down, the mountains are easy to avoid. Bombing and shooting are also easy to control.

You can make the game more difficult by changing the rate of fuel use, speeds and scores etc, but even so I found it simple to play and ultimately not very exciting.

However, I had no trouble loading and running it. The screen display is clear and the instructions are easy to follow. (The tape automatically programs the QS sound board and character board if these are available).



A group of children might enjoy this game, perhaps competing for the highest score. Otherwise, though competently produced and executed, it is rather boring compared to the similar but more sophisticated versions of the game on the market.

C.C-R.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

R

RESCUE

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£5.95
Computer Rentals,
140 Whitechapel Road,
London E1.

Rescue by D. Barker is another adventure type game. It is a little different, in that a limited amount of graphics are used. The object is to get from the inner ring to the outer ring and then to the castle where you make a daring rescue and then escape back to base.

Graphics are used when you look at a map of where you are. Also if you find the radio then you are able to find out where the enemy are. However, if you arrive at a place occupied by the enemy and you do not have a gun or a uniform, then you are automatically dead, which seems a shame really. The game is real-time, hence the enemy will move even if you don't.

The instructions are pretty long so they have to be put on a separate program. This is rather annoying because there is no instruction form or leaflet, so if you forget something then there is no easy way of looking it up whilst playing the game. Quite a good game, if you like that sort of thing. By the way, the packaging is nice.

J.W.

Graphics	20%
Ease of Use	45%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	50%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

REVERSI

ZX81 (16K)
£6.95
Mine Of Information,
1 Francis Avenue,
St. Albans,
Hertfordshire AL3 6BL.

This is a computer version of the board game, also known as Othello, and can be played by two people against each other or by one player against the computer. Reversi is a sort of thinking man's draughts, originally played with counters on an eight by eight board.

Full instructions for playing the computer version, including rules and playing hints, are supplied. The tape loaded first time, typing RUN produced a menu of options. The full range of options is superb; one or two players, sample game, change sides, choice of who starts, replay game, set up board and nine levels of play.

The program is written in machine code and has a fast response. At level one it's almost instantaneous, although at higher levels it slows considerably. The screen display is set out simply and clearly with an update score displayed. Moves are entered by letter-number, D6 for example, and invalid moves are not allowed. The program seems to be well error-trapped — it resisted my best efforts to confuse it.

It has just about all the features that both beginners and experts are likely to need and its playing ability is high indeed. I refuse to say how many times it beat me at level one.

R.E.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	90%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	85%
Value for Money	95%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	

ROBOT NIM

ATOM (5K)
£3.95
A & F Software,
10 Wilpshire Avenue,
Longsight,
Manchester.

Nim is believed to have originated in ancient China. In its classic form, you have 4 heaps of counters with 7,5,3, and 1 counters in each heap respectively.

Two players take it in turns and may remove as many counters as they wish, but only from one heap each turn. The one who takes the last counter is the winner. The strategy can be defined mathematically and, once you know it, it's easy to win against an inexperienced player.

In this version, you play the computer and the objects being removed are cute little baby robots! On running the program, you are given the option of defining the number of lines (heaps) and the number of robots per line. Then you are asked whether you wish to go first, and the robots are displayed. The robots seem to be aware of their fate, because periodically they open their mouths and bleat!

After specifying the line number and number of robots to be removed, the robot executioner appears and marches up the screen, pausing to look at your response, before setting off to find his victims — if he has to go back to find them, he grumpily stumps his way down the screen! After finding the right line, he turns and gives a sinister laugh, before blasting the robots off the screen.

The program runs in 5K and uses the ATOM's basic graphics. The author is to be congratulated on his imaginative use of graphics and this program is an object lesson in what can be achieved. It is well crashproofed and the instruction sheet is hardly needed, as the program provides all the necesary prompts. The tape also includes an Index routine so that you can set up your tape recorder.

This program presents a simple game in a most imaginitive and entertaining way.

B.P.

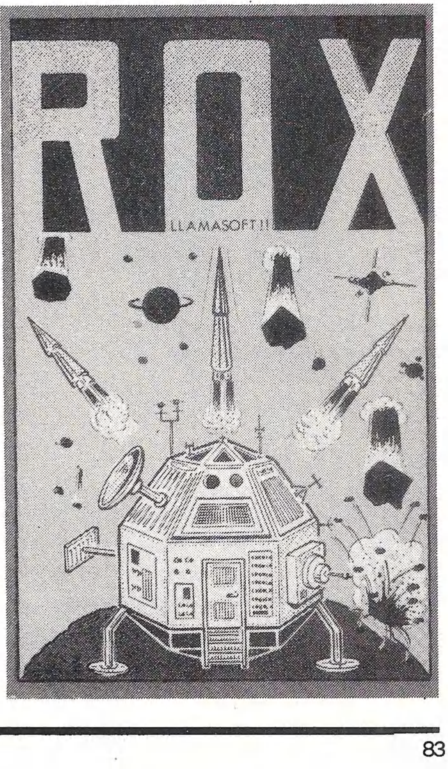
Graphics	72%
Ease of Use	82%
Instructions	41%
Play it Again	32%
Value for Money	81%
Star Quality ★ ★	

ROX 64

Commodore 64
£4.95
Llamasoft,
49 Mount Pleasant,
Tadley,
Hampshire RG26 6BN.

Retro Thrusters Activated! Planetfall successful. A bleak landscape upon which your multicoloured lunar module slowly descends is the scenario for Rox 64, a cross between Asteroids and Lunar Lander.

Underneath the lunar surface your craft's status is



displayed, along with an unusual Damage Percentage display which increases as coloured boulders drift down and crash mightily into the surface.

Once your percentage has reached a certain level, your craft is destroyed by an impressive earthquake.

Your only defence is to fire rockets diagonally or straight up to intercept the boulders, and you gain points for each hit plus an accuracy bonus. A Smart Bomb is available for desperate situations. Should you destroy all the rox, a large mother ship bleeps down and rescues your craft for a large points bonus.

The instructions at the beginning of the game weren't too clear, but I found them easy to pick up as I went along. Loading presented no problems whatsoever.

The boulders and missiles are slow to move, but there is an addictive quality to the game, and the colour displays between waves are excellent. All in all, good value for money.

D.A.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	65%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

S

SCHIZOIDS

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.50
Imagine Software,
Masons Buildings,
Exchange Street East,
Liverpool.

I suppose that after Arcadia anything would be a letdown, and this certainly is. Very high resolution graphics are all very well, but in black and white? On a ZX Spectrum?

Basically you have to pilot your somewhat fragile space-bulldozer around the screen, avoiding the large spinning shapes which wander on from all directions. In the centre of the screen is a Black Hole, looking rather like a Christmas Tree star having a fit.

Once bulldozed into said hole the shapes disappear, but don't expect to score any points. You don't score points at all in Schizoids — you simply exist. The number of seconds for which you manage this feat becomes your score.

Easy? Not at all. Your bulldozer explodes if hit in the sides, and if hit head-on at any great speed. So the whole game can be reduced to just steering the craft around and staying out of trouble.

R.H.

Graphics	50%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	75%
Play it Again	25%
Value for Money	50%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

SCRAMBLE

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£5.50
Mikro-Gen,
24 Agar Crescent,
Bracknell,
Berkshire.

This game presents you with an impressive menu, but the meal to follow is rather mediocre — a bit like ordering a Crepe Suzette in a five star hotel and being served a pancake with orange juice!

After loading, you are presented with a selection of speeds ranging from slow through normal to fast, and a choice of Missiles, UFOs, Meteors or the Fortress and Base.

I duly did battle with all of the above-mentioned hazards at all the aforementioned speeds, but still could not whip up any enthusiasm for a second helping.

As an introduction to this type of game, maybe — though what an inexperienced player would make of the plane ploughing through moutains without any apparent damage I can't imagine.

MIKRO-GEN
Scramble
Software for your Sinclair

B.B.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	85%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	55%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

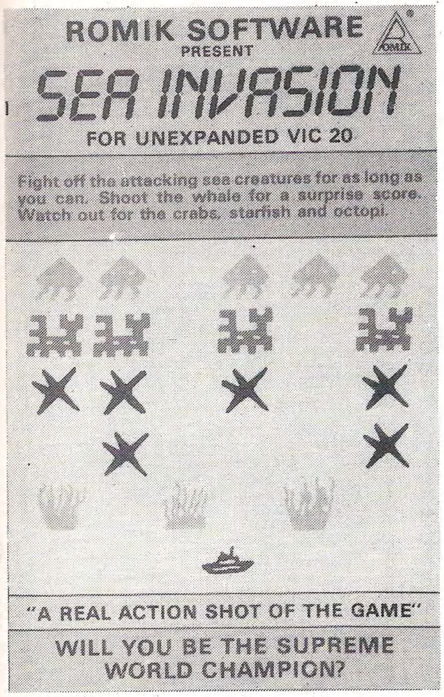
SEA INVASION

VIC-20 (unexpanded)
£9.99
Romik Software,
24 Church Street,
Slough,
Berkshire SL1 1PT.

Based on the Space Invaders theme, but instead of aliens an assortment of octopi, crabs and starfish. These give 30, 20 and 10 points respectively if you destroy them — but they are out to destroy you too.

With the aid of a speargun and temporary shelter behind sea plants, you must attempt to rid the ocean of these creatures before they overrun you. But if you do succeed in clearing one horde, another takes its place moving at a faster pace until your three lives are used up.

The are five skill levels and a choice of joystick or keyboard



ROMIK SOFTWARE
PRESENT
SEA INVASION
FOR UNEXPANDED VIC 20

Fight off the attacking sea creatures for as long as you can. Shoot the whale for a surprise score. Watch out for the crabs, starfish and octopi.

"A REAL ACTION SHOT OF THE GAME"

WILL YOU BE THE SUPREME WORLD CHAMPION?

control, both equally effective.

High scoring is possible for the skilled player, with the added attraction of a mystery bonus when you spear the stray shark speeding across the top of the screen. On the whole, an entertaining game.

K.W.

Graphics	75%
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	68%
Value for Money	40%
Star Quality ★ ★	

THE SHIP OF DOOM

ZX81 (16K)
£7.00
Artic Computing,
396 James Reckitt Avenue,
Hull HU8 0JA.

You are on board your spaceship which is trapped inside a huge alien craft. Your task is to explore the alien ship, free your spaceship and escape. To do this you must find various objects and use them in the correct manner to complete the game. It's not easy and not achieved in one attempt. I was thankful for the save game feature.

This is the third, adventure C, in Artic's series of excellent machine code adventures. The format remains the same — no graphics, a written report on your location, objects and exits, and a fast response to commands. Instructions are usually entered as two words but the program accepts N, S, E or W for movement. The supplied instructions outline the situation and away you go, with only your wits and an occasional cryptic HELP clue.

One problem with this type of game is that you're never sure if something is intended or if it is a genuine bug. On typing 'wear specs' the screen went black. Five minutes later I decided that the game had crashed. Repeating this produced the same apparent crash. Is this intended or is it a bug? Help.

R.E.

Graphics	—
Ease of Use	90%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

SIEGE

VIC-20 (unexpanded)
£6.99
Postern,
PO Box 2,
Andovers Ford,
Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire.

Your task is to defend your castle against the evil marauders who are climbing the walls. To stop them you must hurl rocks. But naturally they get annoyed at this and start to move even faster.

Stop them reaching the top of the wall at all costs or you've lost.

There's a choice of joystick or keyboard operation. But using the keyboard is just too fiddly when you must move fast. I was only happy when using the joystick.

Siege is a good example of not always choosing higher-priced and better advertised games. At £6.66 this game is very good value from one of the lesser-known software houses.

If Space Invaders becomes a little too predictable, try Siege instead.

P.R.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

SIMPLE ARITHMETIC

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£4.95
Camel Micros,
33A Commercial Road,
Weymouth,
Dorset.

Two programs aimed at helping children improve their arithmetic.

Numbers is a mathematical Space Invaders game which gives practice in whole, decimal and fractional number rules.

You answer the sum by shooting an invader from the column which contains the correct answer before they land — a wrong answer loses a life. An interesting way of motivating children to do drill exercise.

Kipper is a Battleships-type game in which you enter co-ordinates in an attempt to locate the kipper. Not so graphically interesting and of less obvious educational value as Numbers; it soon became boring even though the difficulty level increased.

Both programs loaded easily and began with a prompt for name, levels etc. These are a bit vague and you get no help from the insert instructions.

But on both games colour and graphics are put to good use, with sound used on Numbers. A useful maths aid, but could do with better instructions, and it takes a few trial runs to become familiar with the operating procedure.

R.E.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

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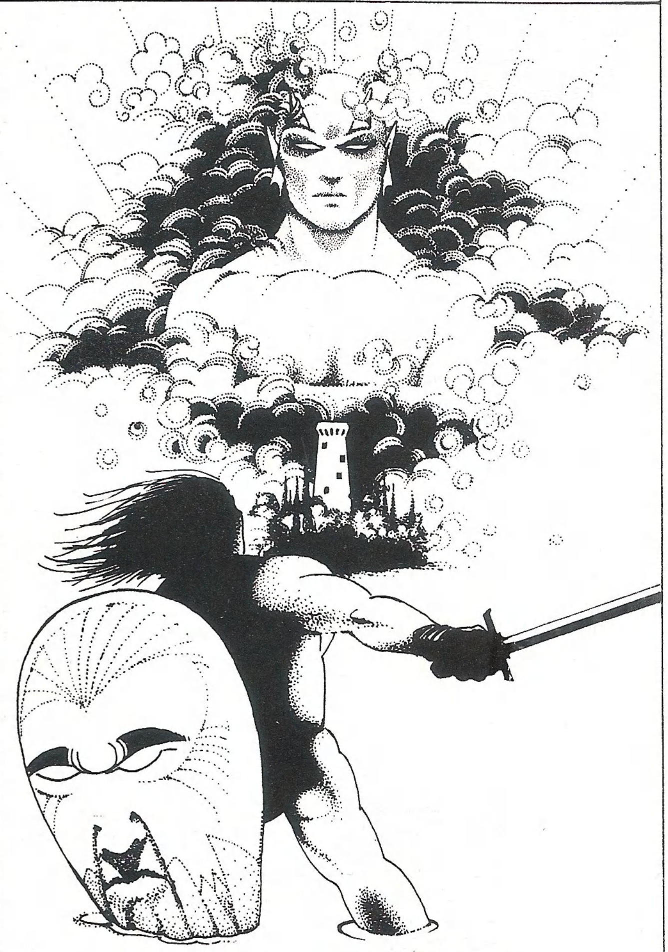

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TRADE ENQUIRIES WELCOME

SPACE FORTRESS

VIC-20 (unexpanded)
£9.99
Romik Software,
24 Church Street,
Slough SL1 1PT.

One of the better Space Invader style games. According to the storyline, you are lost in space following a breakdown in your craft and have to destroy the Space Fortress.

This is defended by a strong armoury including a Suicide Squad, Sidewinders and Sistorian Swoopers. Finally you fight off the Purple Avangers before you can make an attack on the Fortress.

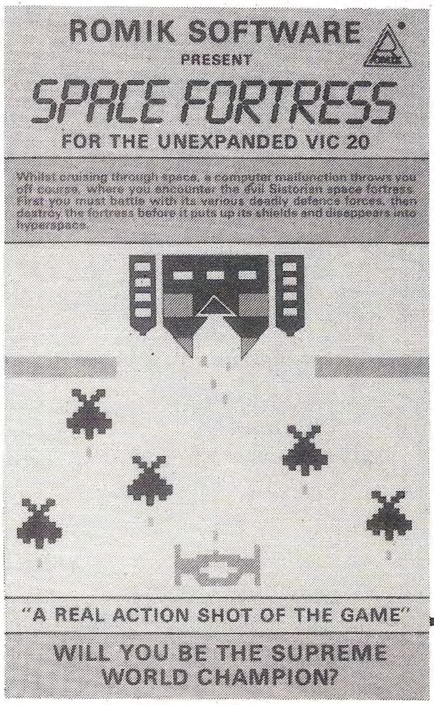
Destroying the Fortress gains an extra life (to add to the five granted at the beginning of the game). A maximum of nine lives can be accumulated, and with them a very large score.

The instructions are clear, and well set out in the program. For the keenest enthusiast there are up to 20 skill levels and even a competition to enter to find a world champion.

Good use of sound and graphics. To make the best use of the fast action, use a joystick rather than the keyboard.

V.R.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	75%
Play it Again	65%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	



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SPACEGUARD

BBC Micro (32K)
£7.50
MP Software & Services,
165 Spital Road,
Bromborough,
Merseyside L62 2EA.

A fairly simple, but quite addictive arcade game this one! As the 'space guard' of the game's title you control a spaceship under attack from various alien vessels determined to turn the screen into a mine field.

Points are scored by firing a laser at the alien vessels (150 points) or the mines they have deposited (50 points), with a bonus 1000 points being awarded for each screen cleared.

Initially, the emphasis is on 'space' rather than 'guard', screen presentation being a little unimaginative and consisting of a large black space occupied by your ship and a few alien vessels. But with successive screens, more and more alien spacecraft appear, making the game increasingly difficult.

There are three different types of alien vessel, resembling a traditional green space invader, a blue dumb-bell (this splits into two flashing 'liquorice allsorts' when hit) and a pair of red lips!

Movement of the player's space ship is by keyboard or joystick. I didn't like using the keyboard because of the close grouping of the keys used to move the ship, but control by joystick was superb and the best I've encounterd in any joystick game for the BBC machine.

The graphics are perhaps a little crude (Mode 2 is used for the screen display) but this is more than compensated by the speed of the machine code program and the good use of sound effects.

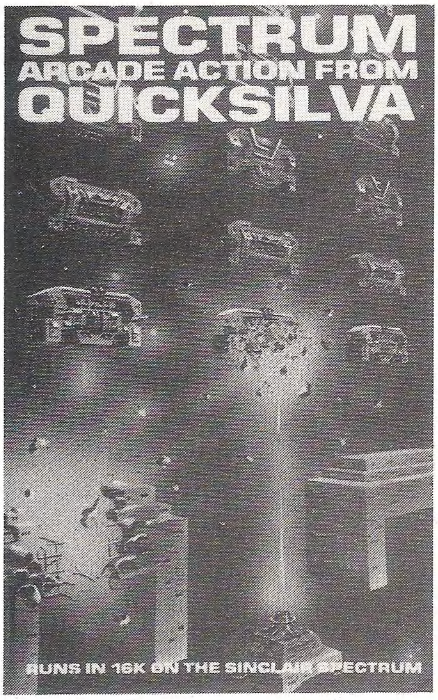
I.D.S.

Graphics	50%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	65%
Play it Again	57%
Value for Money	65%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

SPACE INTRUDERS

ZX Spectrum (16K), ZX81 (16K)
£4.95 (£5.95 for ZX81)
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton.

Superbly packaged, Quicksilva's version of the standard Space Invaders format comes with a helpful keyboard overlay, a hold facility (useful for stiff fingers) and a high score table. The solid machine code program never failed to load while I was testing it.



A good display, with finely-detailed invader graphics, though I didn't like the pink forts. The laser base responds quickly and moves smoothly, with the intruders reaching an impressive speed in the endgame. High quality sound effects add excitement.

Occasionally a silent blue ship flits across the screen. This is billed in the attract mode as carrying mystery points, but on destruction none are displayed — a real mystery. And invaders sometimes die, awarding points, before a shot is fired. But there are no other serious bugs.

Fun to play, and great dexterity is required to clear more than 10 screens. A good implementation of the arcade game, all it lacks is originality.

C.L.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

SPACE MISSION

Dragon 32
£6.91
Gem Software,
Unit D,
The Maltings,
Station Road,
Sawbridgeworth,
Hertfordshire.

A variant of Asteroids, in which you fend off the asteroids while trying to shoot the enemy fleet.

An asteroid is worth 100 points, a hit on the outer wing of an enemy ship gets you 100 points, but you score 500 for a direct hit.

As in the arcade version, you rotate your ship, and you are armed with eight lasers — one for each direction. But objects hitting your ship gradually whittle down your lasers; active lasers are shown at the bottom of the screen.

The game is for one player, and control is via the keyboard. Seven skill levels are accompanied by a funny remark. Selection of skill level is immediately followed by automatic launching and display of instructions.

No colour, since the highest resolution is used, and no sound either — but that might prove too much of a distraction anyway.

For if anything, the game is rather too fast, and it's practically impossible to avoid damage to your ship. The best tactic is just to rotate constantly in one direction, firing all the while. This makes for rather a mindless, but nonetheless enjoyable game.

D.W.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	65%
Value for Money	55%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

SPACE PANIC

ATOM (6 + 6K)
£6.90
A & F Software,
10 Wilpshire Avenue,
Longsight,
Manchester.

A & F Software have been around for almost two years now. Their early offerings — apart from 'Robot Nim' — were nothing to write home about, but recently their programs have been steadily improving in quality and this game marks their highest achievement yet.

It also marks a new departure for a software house because, so convinced are they that you will like this game, that they are offering you your money back if you don't think it is good value. This is a good thing and I hope that other software houses will follow the example! OK, so what's all the fuss about?

This is not quite a unique game — there are now versions for the Apple, Atari and BBC Micro — but it's unusual in that there is no arcade equivalent; the nearest to it is 'Dig-Dug'. The plot centres around a gardener, who is quietly enjoying a lazy day in his multi-storey garden (that's futuristic for you!), when our old friends, the Invaders, drop in for a quick spot of carnage and havoc. Not having his laser handy (well, you wouldn't, would you?), he has to quickly move around the pathways and ladders connecting the various levels of his garden, digging holes with his trusty spade for the beasts to fall into.

However, they tend to get trapped by the feelers (painful!) and it takes a few swift clouts on the head with the spade (very painful!) to get them to fall through and be buried forever. To make matters worse, once you've despatched one lot, another crew turn up. These must be the 'heavies', because they have to fall through two levels before they stay buried! So it goes on, until our poor gardener meets his inevitable fate and the invaders rule — OK?

The game needs a 6 + 6K ATOM and uses no less than six keys. Four of them control movement and are bunched together at the left-hand side of the keyboard. Surprisingly, this does not take too long to get used to, as you don't often use the up/down keys, and I don't think that the arrangement can be improved upon. The other two keys — on the right-hand side — are for digging and filling holes.

The graphics are excellent, the best I've ever seen, with fully detailed and animated characters and a good range of sound effects is provided.

You will neeed your wits about you, as the action is fast, but don't be fooled if the invader comes charging at you — they are a bit dim and may move away again, so keep you cool and don't move until the last minutes, if you want to get a good score! The scoring is shown after each wave of invaders, as well as on the screen during play. This allows you to recover after a fast battle and also to plan the strategy of your next one, since there is an increasing bonus to be earned by clever play.

A high-score is provided and this is easily programmed at the start of a run. Incidentally, unlike 'Space Invaders', these beasts can be beaten, if you are skilful enough to last out.

The usual 'Index' routine is provided, as is an instruction sheet, but the latter is hardly needed as full instructions are shown on-screen, at the start of a run.

This is, without doubt, the best game I've ever seen for the ATOM and sets a standard that will be hard to beat. Highly recommended! Buy it and I don't think that you will be asking for your money back!

B.P.

Graphics	82%
Ease of Use	71%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	81%
Value for Money	81%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

SPACE RACE

Dragon 32
£7.95
Compusense,
PO Box 169,
Palmers Green,
London N13.

In Space Race you do battle against four different kinds of marauding alien, each with different actions and values. The 16 levels of play start fast — and go up to extremely fast.

You start the game with four ships, and every 10,000 points you get another one, up to a maximum of five. Your remaining ships are displayed below the track on the right, with the score on the left.

If you're feeling competitive, there's a high-score league table catering for up to nine entries.

Written in machine code, Space Race can be played using either joystick or keys. I tried both methods. Though it is possible to get a reasonable score using keys, the aliens are at an even greater advantage.

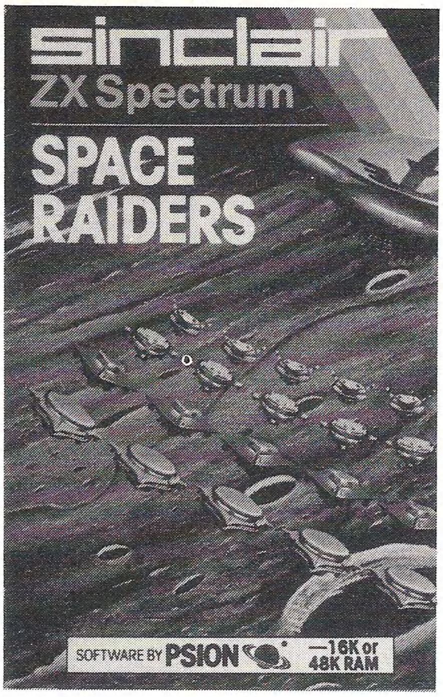
Personally, I found the sound effects annoying, but otherwise the game was fun to play, and addictive too. No loading problems, and comprehensive instructions are included.

J.M.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★

SPACE RAIDERS

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£4.95
Psion,
2 Huntsworth Mews,
Gloucester Place,
London NW1 6DD.



A good version of the ever-popular Space Invaders. Well-designed, smooth graphics, with an effective sound accompaniment.

You start with three guns, and another gun is said to be available after 1,000 point. To verify that, though, more expert hands than mine would have to operate the controls, which are the Z and X keys for dodging right and left, and the Space key for firing.

Both the current and the high score are shown.

Though the principle of this game is well established by now, this implementation is particularly good. Worth the money on that basis alone.

D.T.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	85%
Play it Again	90%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★ ★

SPACE RAIDERS & BOMBER

ZX81
£3.95
Psion,
2 Huntsworth Mews,
Gloucester Place,
London NW1 6DD.

Space Raiders is a ZX81 version of the 'traditional' arcade game Space Invaders in which you defend the earth from successive armies of invaders.

You have three lives (bases), and points are awarded for each raider ship hit. Raiders may be played at one of three speeds, normal, fast and super-fast, and I was told by an experienced player who had a go that it bears the most similarity to the arcade game when it is played in the superfast mode, which was too fast for me.

This program is similar to the many other invaders programs on the market, but has the bonus of a second game, Bomber, on the B side.

In this 'blitz'-type game, you use bombs and rockets in an attempt to raze a skyscraper city to the ground before your plane either crashes, or is knocked out by the blast from one of your own rockets. It is probably impossible to completely obliterate the city. I tried in vain several times at the slowest speed (and there are nine speeds altogether). Not a particularly inspired game, I thought, but one which makes a welcome change from invaders.

A nice finishing touch to Raiders and Bomber is the display at the end of each game which gives the score for that game and the highest score so far. These programs are pretty well idiot proof, and I (even I) could not get either of them to crash.

N.P.

Graphics	57%
Ease of Use	65%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	55%
Value for Money	78%
Star Quality	★ ★

SPACE RESCUE

VIC-20 (5K)
£6.95
Sumlock,
Royal London House,
198 Deansgate,
Manchester M3 3NE.

Space Rescue is an interesting and unusual game which stands out from the standard arcade games around at the moment.

You have to negotiate an asteroid field, land on one of several landing pads and rescue the poor creatures who are trapped on the planet's surface, battle back through the asteroids and finally dock with the mother ship.

In its early stages the game looks almost too easy, but this quickly changes as the asteroids become more tightly packed calling for greater and greater dexterity to pass through them. As well as controlling over the horizontal movement of the ship, you also have a limited supply of ammunition with which you can destroy some of the asteroids.

There seems to be a bug in the program which occasionally lets an asteroid scroll from right to left through the surface of the planet. While being somewhat disconcerting, this caused no problems in the running of the game. All in all, a good tape, but slightly overpriced.

M.B.

Graphics	69%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	65%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	48%
Star Quality ★ ★	

SPECTRUM GOLF

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£3.95
B S McAlley,
1 Cowlgaze,
Chinnor,
Oxon OX9 4TJ.

There are a number of golf programs on the market, and this is as good as any. The supplied tape has a 16K version on one side and 48K on the other. Both loaded first time.

The only difference between them seems to be that instructions are added for the 48K version, but a printed version is included anyway. Instructions are simple and straightforward.

The program is quite well designed, most likely errors being trapped. You can select the number of holes, which is useful for practice but I don't know of any real courses with 10,000 holes!

I think play might become a little boring after a while, as you can only choose the direction and the strength of each shot (no choice of clubs, for example) and the computer plays you out of the bunkers.

Photograph courtesy P.A. Reuter.

Display is clear, each hole being set out quite quickly, and colour choices make play on a black and white TV perfectly possible.

Spectrum Golf is quite attractive and fun to play, good value if you've never played the game before, but offering nothing special. Since it's written in BASIC, though, it should be easy to improve.

N.W.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

STARQUEST/ ENCOUNTER

VIC-20 (16K)
£7.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
Palmerston Road,
Southampton SO11 1LL.

These are a pair of Pixel Production games which are being sold on the same cassette by Quicksilva.

Starquest is an "interstellar exploration" game in which you captain a space ship tasked with searching out new planets.

You are initially presented with a star filled screen on which you select a star system by means of a cruciform cursor. You then travel to that destination. Your on-board computer scans the system and selects the best planet for exploration. Once in orbit, you must land a shuttle by use of the cursor controls. Hazards such as meteor storms or alien ships can be encountered at this point. If you land, you claim the planet, take off and the whole cycle starts again.

On the whole, the plot was rather weak and the game soon became boring. The use of colours, graphics, sound and animation was excellent but all graphics sequences were slow, drawn out and repeated *ad* nauseam.

Encounter is a sort of IQ test in which you are abducted by aliens and tested to see if you are worthy of knowing the ultimate secret.The initial sequences had the usual overdose of good graphics with excessive quantities of appalling text (Mills and Boon reject?).

The IQ tests ranged from the easy to the incomprehensible but were pretty and nicely presented. Players of inadequate IQ were jettisoned into space, which is what happened to me twice (much to my embarrassment!)

This is a game which will appeal to the thinking VIC-20 owner even if it's only so that he can find out the ultimate secret.

Overall this package was rather weak and of limited appeal.

A.W.

Graphics	77%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	58%
Play it Again	55%
Value for Money	48%
Star Quality ★ ★	

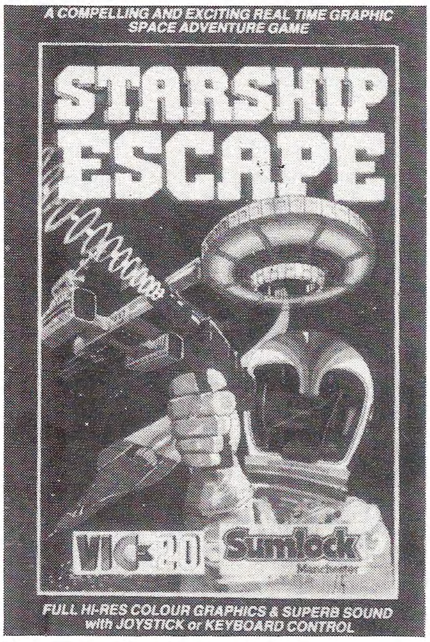
STARSHIP ESCAPE

VIC-20 (+ 16K)
£9.95
Sumlock,
Royal London House,
198 Deansgate,
Manchester M3 3NE.

This game is a hybrid — a graphical adventure which requires the fast reactions associated with arcade games.

You are the pilot of a space ship which has been captured by an alien craft. Your ship has been dismantled and the pieces distributed throughout the alien ship. Using either joystick or keyboard, you must wander through the ship, find the pieces, collect them in the air lock and reassemble them.

There are a number of nasties including androids, robots and space spiders in the rooms, all which are determined to stop you succeeding. As you enter each room you are given an aerial view and must either avoid the enemy using cunning or shoot it with your laser. Not all enemies, however, can be shot.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STARSHIP ESCAPE
VIC-20
Sumlock
Manchester
FULL HI-RES COLOUR GRAPHICS & SUPERB SOUND with JOYSTICK or KEYBOARD CONTROL

The search starts at the air lock and you are returned there if you are captured by one of the opposition. K9, the robot dog of *Dr Who* fame, will help you in your task.

The game uses good graphics and is fast and frantic. A high degree of agility and good tactics are required to avoid the enemy. On the whole an excellent game which should appeal to most age groups.

A.W.

Graphics	79%
Ease of Use	85%
Instructions	87%
Play it Again	85%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

STAR TRADER

Newbrain
£8.50
Computasolve,
8 Central Parade,
St. Marks Hill,
Surbiton,
Surrey.

'Perpetual insignificance' is the cost of failure in this text adventure game. Starting with a modest 17500 credits and five cargo shuttles, you have 40 days to make a profit so vast that your sponsors will consider you worthy of membership in the Federation of Space Traders.

Three well-presented text displays give full information on the current prices in the solar system, details of shuttle journeys and cargoes, and distances between the planets. Helpful prompts assist in buying and selling, and 'news flashes' tell you of events affecting prices, journey times, or cargoes.

After 40 'days' the computer evaluates your performance.

The program loaded easily from cassette and included a page of on-screen instructions and information before starting the game. No bugs were found, but there was one annoying spelling mistake (WNAT instead of WANT) and when playing at the fast speed some of the news flashes 'flashed' so briefly it was impossible to read them.

Generally an interesting and unpredictable, but slightly overpriced game of interplanetary commerce.

S.P.

Graphics	45%
Ease of Use	38%
Instructions	50%
Play it Again	40%
Value for Money	25%
Star Quality ★	

STARWAR

BBC Micro (16K)
£5.95
The Software House,
46 Oxford Street,
London WC1.

You're at the mercy of waves of yellow perils instead of the standard green meanies in this space attack game following the invaders vein.

True to form your task is to wipe out hoardes of aliens which rain down upon your missile cruiser in deadly formation. This game has another slight variation on a theme in that the yellow perils drop two bombs at a time instead of the usual one. Something of a death wish is on you and your red bases, because these bombs seem to be of the 'smart' variety only dropping shells where your cruiser is positioned. These invaders aren't daft.

Making your job more difficult is that you only have one life so take extra care and fewer daredevil risks which allow you to work up quite a high score as long as you move at the speed of light.

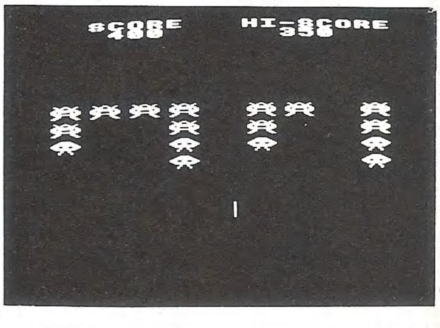
Controls are via the keyboard, specifically the left and right arrows for your cruiser's movement and the Space bar for your weapon control. Again these are standard keys for this type of game and present no real problem.

The name of this game, Starwar, is slightly misleading as it conjures up visions of a trench-like game based on the ever popular movie Starwars. In reality it's nothing like it.

Full marks for the price. It really is good value for money.

D.B.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	57%
Instructions	62%
Play it Again	65%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	



STRATEGIC COMMAND

Dragon 32
£9.99
Romik Software,
24 Church Street,
Slough,
Berkshire SL1 1PT.

A game of skill and strategy written in BASIC for two players using joysticks.

The object is to overrun your opponent's capital.

There are two programs on the tape. The first enables you to test the sensitivity of your joysticks and the second is the game itself. Both programs must be loaded.

Photograph courtesy P.A. Reuter.

At the start of each game the map is drawn with the capital, army and navy bases for each force. Players control either the red or yellow bases. Land and Sea units may be deployed and moved using the joysticks. When the opposing forces are near to each other battle will commence — the outcome depending on the strength of each force and the skill of the players. Each unit is displayed by one figure only regardless of the number of elements.

Other features include mine laying units which can lay two minefields. These do not affect your force but play havoc with your opponent and air reconnaissance. At which time you are able to discover the make up of a rival unit.

The instruction sheet included contains detailed information on how to play and what to expect during the game. It takes a while to appreciate just what can be done.

My opponent and I thoroughly enjoyed this absorbing game. The graphics are of a high standard.

I loaded both programs first time on several occasions.

J.M.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	85%
Play it Again	95%
Value for Money	90%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

SUBSPACE STRIKER & ZOR

ZX81 (16K), VIC-20 (+16K)
£3.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton.

Subspace Striker is an interactive game, but a lot of time is still spent watching the screen displays — too much maybe for the trigger happy arcade game enthusiast itching to shoot down some federation ships with antimat torpedoes.The graphics are certainly very good; each of the four types of ship in the federation fleet, and your own ship — Swordfish — is displayed in great detail on the screen at the appropriate time. The interactive part of the game involves targetting a federation ship in your gun sights and then blasting it from the sky, after which you quickly dive back into the safety of deep space to await the next federation ship to pass. You have 10 antimat torpedoes in each game, and there is an element of danger as the federation fleet also has weapons.

Not a game to get the adrenalin really flowing — too much time is spent watching the screen displays for that — but nevertheless an absorbing game which is good fun to play.

The second game on this cassette is Zor, Battle of the Robots. Graphics are a feature of this Pixel game too. In this one, you are on a remote and barren planet and must uphold Earth's honour and supremacy in a battle with a Champion of Zor. You start equally matched with your opponent with 2,000 MJ of energy, which can be used as a weapon or shield. From then it's up to you to use your energy in the best possible way to overcome your adversary — and good luck.

The extensive use of graphics in each game on this cassette means that both take up nearly all 16K of memory, and both take a long time to load. The programs are preceded by a short loading test which can be used to set optimum volume/tone settings on your recorder. I had no problem loading either game.

N.P.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

SUPERCHESS

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£4.95
CP Software,
17 Orchard Lane,
Prestwood,
Great Missenden,
Buckinghamshire.

This program is not far off the super chess it claims to be, and a great deal of thought has gone into it. There are two modes of use: ordinary play, and analysis, which allows you to reconfigure the board. You can switch between modes within a game. There are two types of play, namely tactical and positional. Tactical is faster and positional more varied, so I assume that the positional mode considers more moves. There are 10 levels of play, but the weakest defeated me; and all normal moves are allowed, including castling and capture en passant.

However the program also

has a number of flaws which can spoil play. Firstly the board is green and white, whilst the pieces are red and yellow. The red pieces are clear, but yellow is difficult to see on the green and almost impossible on white. Secondly, I had some difficulty deciding which was king and which queen. Third — in switching between modes it is easy to crash the program. There are no checks to see, for example, if you have added three kings to the black pieces. Finally, and most important, the program does not seem to recognise a stalemate, in tactical mode at least (I was not able to achieve stalemate in positional mode!) On one occasion I was in the ludicrious position of asking for a recommendation (a good, useful facility), which put the machine into check; it moving out of check; the next recommended move returning my piece; a move by the computer's king; and the next recommended move returning us to the same check. This implies that not only is a stalemate not recognised, but also perpetual check. Possibly higher levels avoid this problem, but I doubt it.

All in all, a good program to which a little more attention to detail would make it exceptional.

N.W.

Graphics	50%
Ease of Use	65%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	65%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

SUPERCHESS II

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£7.95
CP Software,
17 Orchard Lane,
Prestwood,
Buckinghamshire HP16 0NN.

"Guaranteed able to beat Sargon II and all other Spectrum chess programs." That's the impressive claim made by CP Software in adverts for its new Superchess program, for the 48K ZX Spectrum.

CP SOFTWARE
SUPERCHESS II
For Sinclair 48K SPECTRUM

When put to the test, the game did beat several other chess programs, including one for the Acorn ATOM and another for the BBC Micro. There are seven levels of play, numbered 0 to 6, the first four being fast enough for tournament chess, and even in level 0 it takes a lot of beating.

Response time is fast, with an average of about three seconds in level 0. However, as in any chess game, the overall response time depends on the complexity of the board layout.

Screen layout and method of entering moves is standard. Both the computer's and your last 10 or so moves are displayed on the screen during play, but unfortunately there is no facility for printing these out or saving the game halfway through.

One nice feature is the ability to change the colours of the board according to your own taste. I found the best combination was red and cyan pieces on a black and white board.

Like most computer chess games nowadays, Superchess will suggest a move for you if the going gets tough. It will even play itself, at any level, if you ask it to.

An analyse facility allows you to rearrange the board for chess problems etc. At one point, while I was losing a game, I switched to analyse mode and removed all the computer's pieces from the board. Not to be deterred, Superchess simply moved one of my pieces.

The menu of features available on demand includes 'tec', short for technical information, which gives a short description of the algorithm for the computer's moves. Small things like this show how much thought has gone into this program. Excellent value for money and highly recommended.

I.O.

Graphics	95%
Ease of Use	90%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	90%
Value for Money	90%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	

SUPER GLOOPER & FROGS

ZX81 (16K)
£4.95
Psion,
2 Huntsworth Mews,
Gloucester Place,
London NW1 6DD.

The cassette contains two games and on the A side is the title game, Super Glooper. It is, I suppose, really a 'Pac-Man' type game in reverse. Instead of rushing around a maze eating food pills or whatever, in this one you 'paint' each square of the maze as you go over it.

There are, of course, four aliens who roam the maze, and the object is to paint the whole maze before they catch and destroy you. You have four lives per game. In each of the four corners of the maze is a shield, and if you can reach one of these you may catch one, or more, of the aliens.

For each square in the maze that is painted, a score of 10 points is given, and for each shield you get 50 points. It is profitable to chase the aliens — once you have a shield, of course — since you get an incredible 1,600 points if you catch all four aliens with one shield. Of course, shields do not last for long, and catching more than even one alien is not an easy task.

HANG ON . . .

A nice feature of this game is a pause facility. If you get in a fluster — with an alien close by, you might suddenly be unable to find the right keys to get away from him — you can pause, or freeze the game while you compose yourself, However, I found Psion's choice of control keys rather difficult to get used to. Keys 1 to 5 move you up, for example, whereas I would rather be able to use any of the keys in the top row for up. This is, of course, very much a matter of personal preference, other players might well be quite content with Psion's layout.

If you manage to completely paint a maze, more difficult mazes appear. If you find the slowest speed too easy, there are five levels of play to choose from and these can be selected at the start of each game.

Super Glooper is written in machine code. It is a short program and takes only 80 seconds to load. If you have already got one of the many versions of Pac-Man now on the market for your ZX81, you will probably not be very interested in this game. If not, you may well find it a useful addition to your library of games. Not a particularly inspired game, but competent and well-written, and quite good fun.

JUMP TO IT

I also found Frogs, on the B side, an enjoyable game. It is similar to 'Frogger', the basic idea being simple but quite effective.

The screen displays a river with two banks, one at the top of the screen and the other at the bottom. On the river are nine lanes of boats, with boats in adjacent lanes travelling in opposite directions, left to right and right to left across the screen. (The screen looks rather like a bird's eye view down on a very busy motorway).

Eight frogs wait on the lower bank and the object is to help them each in turn across the river to five jetties on the upper bank. They must jump from boat to boat, if any land in the river or miss a jetty they are lost. Points are scored for each frog that successfully crosses the river. Two factors make this game more difficult: there is a time limit for each game (100 seconds); and once a jetty has been reached by a frog, that jetty cannot be used again in that game. Whilst the jetties 'downstream' of the last lane of boats are relatively easy to reach, those farthest upstream are much more difficult to land on.

As well as jumping forwards across the river, frogs can jump backwards and left and right along the top of the boats (although they cannot jump from the back of one boat to the front of another coming along behind). Apart from the last frogs, where some manoeuvering is sometimes necessary to get to a still vacant jetty, I found I tended to use the forward keys only.

Again, this is a machine code game and the program is quite short taking about 1½ minutes to load. Movement is smooth and the game is pretty well idiot proof. There are nine levels of play, harder games having faster moving boats. A league table that can record the scores of up to eight players is displayed at the end of each game, so a competition between players can be held.

This is the sort of game that requires a lot of concentration. It would probably make a very good alternative to the breathaliser test — a drink or two and I would imagine that it would become well nigh impossible to get any frogs across as the moving boats just form a blurr in front of your eyes.

Frogs is not a complicated game, but it is well-written, works well and is enjoyable. At £4.95 for the two games, this cassette represents reasonable value for money.

A.W.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	65%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

SUPER PROGRAMS (CASSETTE G3)

ZX81 (unexpanded)
£4.95
ICL,
Putney Bridge,
London.

Entitled 'Super Programs' the tape contains six programs, five games plus a currency conversion routine, all the programs being for 1K machines.

'Train Race' sets up three trains on the left hand side of the screen. The idea is to guess which train will get to the other side of the screen first (no prizes I'm afraid), the trains' fuel being randomly generated numbers!

The second program on the tape at least demands some skill on the part of the player. The computer asks you to choose a top value, 500 for instance, and then it selects a number between 0 and your chosen value. The player must then try and guess this number in as few attempts as possible. After each guess the computer says either too high or too low which means that, coupled with some lucky guesses, the task is not as impossible as it may sound.

SECRET MESSAGE

'Secret Message' asks one user to input a message. The message is then played back when required, but upon return, is re-written in huge graphic letters which are scanned with only one or two letters on the screen at any one time. It is a very slow process so it is advised not to try the message. "Have gone round to see mother — your dinner is in the oven".

MIND THAT METEOR

This is, in my opinion, the best program on the tape. A meteor field is set up, in the slow manner instead of that of the slick machine code, and the player must guide his spacecraft from the left to the right of the field, which takes up only the top half of the screen, supposedly to conserve memory space.

CHARACTER DOODLE

Another of those, to my mind, annoying little sketchpad programs for which I don't think I can see much utility. A bit of fun for the children I suppose.

CURRENCY CONVERSION

That takes care of the five games. The last program is a currency conversion routine. I suppose it could be called a business program. I must admit that when I first ran this program I couldn't make a lot of sense out of it. This problem was mainly due to a lack of proper explanation in the accompanying cassette documentation and a similar clarity, or lack of it, in the prompts within the program. It may well drive some budding currency converters to a pencil, paper and a calculator.

Admittedly ICL's Super Program range were some of the first cassettes of ZX81 software to appear.

CONCLUSION

I think that this range has been left behind by some of the newer software manufacturers who are coming up with ways to put more exciting and complicated games and routines on 1K machines. Maybe ICL are working on it as I write or maybe it is felt throughout the software industry that the 1K internal RAM.

D.-J.N.

Graphics	5%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	40%
Play it Again	35%
Value for Money	40%
Star Quality ★	

SWAMP MONSTERS

BBC Micro (32K)
£7.50
MP Software & Services,
165 Spital Road,
Bromborough,
Merseyside L62 2AE.

Swamp Monsters is MP Software's variation on the classic Space Panic arcade game.

Pursued by alien monsters (which bear a marked resemblance to Zebedee from *The Magic Roundabout*) you control the movement of a robot around a maze of stepping stones set in a deadly swamp.

As your robot moves he can pick up stones, to leave 'holes' for the monsters to fall into. Stones can then be dropped on a drowning monster to speed up his demise, or to help form a new path across the swamp.

On starting the game you have the option of using a joystick or the cursor movement keys on the keyboard to control the robot. Unfortunately you cannot switch between the two options without reloading the whole game. Movement of the robot and pursuing monsters is slow and jerky so that use of the joystick is not really viable, whilst the cursor keys are grouped very closely together making control of the robot from the keyboard more difficult than it should be.

The graphics are quite good, although the robot — a sort of pink paper bag with stick insect arms and legs — looks ridiculous, and I often found it difficult to tell exactly which stone he was standing on.

Once the swamp has been cleared of monsters a fresh lot appear — apparently more intelligent and worth more points if you're watching your robot's score.

I say "apparently" because I didn't progress so far as to meet them — I became bored with the game long before I'd cleared the second swamp of monsters.

I.D.S.

Graphics	62%
Ease of Use	42%
Instructions	56%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	40%
Star Quality ★	

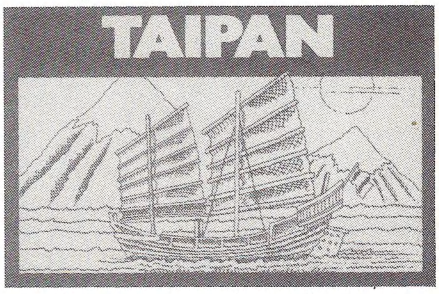
T

TAIPAN

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£4.95
Jaysoft,
6 Wentworth Drive,
Bishop's Stortford,
Hertfordshire.

Following a spate of financial modelling games for the ZX Spectrum comes Taipan, a simulation of the ins and outs of Oriental trading, with the aim of accumulating the princely sum of $1,000,000.

Money is earned by buying and selling various products such as arms, silk, opium, women(!) and general provisions. Goods can be bought cheaply at one of the five far-eastern ports and then sold at a profit at one of the other ports.



Sounds easy, but of course to put a damper on things a particularly nasty piece of work known as Sum Yan (the money lender) is clamouring for your debt of £5,000 (used to buy your junk) to be repaid with hefty interest.

Should Sum Yan become impatient, he will not hesitate to send the boys round, and all your hard-earned cash will be gone. Other hazards include storms while travelling from port to port, and jettisoning of goods to prevent your junk from sinking.

There are three levels of play, from beginner to financial wizard, but the last is the only level really worth playing. Rather repetitive, the same financial tactics applying to nearly every game with little change in the structure of play.

I.O.

Graphics	40%
Ease of Use	50%
Instructions	65%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	50%
Star Quality ★ ★	

TIME-GATE

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£6.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
Palmerston Road,
Southampton SO11 1LL.

Time-Gate involves travelling backwards through the fourth dimension, time itself. We are told that the two thousand year old interstellar Empire founded by Earth was happily going the way of all empires, that is into decline, when the Squarm turned up. They are a race of insectoid reptiles, and before long they had taken over the entire Empire, except for a few planets.

The Temporal Brotherhood decide to overthrow the Squarm, but instead of doing the decent thing and fighting it out man to man (or rather man to reptile), they hit on a sneaky trick. They dig out the two thousand year old Void-Runner 1, a trans-dimensional space ship, and give you the mission of travelling back through time via the Time-Gate until you can destroy the Squarm's home planet before they ever left it.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

The galaxy is made up of 18 sectors, one of which contains the Time-Gate which your ship will automatically pass through provided there are no enemy ships in the sector. Knocking out the enemy ships is the central part of the game which all the rest has been tacked onto. The top two thirds of the TV display are used for the three-dimensional view of space, and as you steer your craft, the stars swirl round according to your movement.

When ships appear they weave in every direction, diving nearer and further away, all the time firing pot shots at you. You have to manoeuvre your craft until the enemy is in line with your two lasers, which fire from either side converging into the centre. I found it best to try to line up the alien along one or other of the beams rather than try to hit it at the narrow point where the beams meet. Unless you get a lucky shot, it will usually take four hits to knock out the opposition, and you can tell when a hit has registered because the enemy ship changes colour.

An unusual arrangement of keys are used for movement — 6 and 7 for left and right, 8 and 9 for up and down. Zero fires the lasers. The program comes with a little keyboard overlay to help you remember them, but before long, the keys are memorised and then the overlay tends to get in the way rather than help.

The bottom third of the TV display is your instrument panel. To the left is the long range scanner which shows all 18 sectors. Alien ships are marked as a short line, and a planet, where you can have repairs done, is shown as a cross. The display is very small indeed, and some people with ropey TVs (or eyesight) may have some difficulty. In the centre of the console display is the message system, which flashes up details about damage sustained and other information as the game progresses. To the right is the target computer display, which consists of four horizontal lines each with a marker on it and is only active when there are enemy ships in the area. The first two lines are the vertical and horizontal tracking indicators and when you have steered Void-Runner 1 so that the markers are in the middle, you are right behind the 'baddie'. The third indicator gives the closing speed and the fourth, the distance between you and the target. The enemy are scattered randomly within the sector, and you can have quite a long wait before they appear on the upper display.

SET THE CONTROLS . . .

The last console instruments are the status indicators for shields, weapons, engines, etc. They start off green and go steadily darker as the systems are damaged, until they turn blue which means that that function is knocked out. When you take a hit, the damage seems to be allocated randomly to one of the various systems, so if you're unlucky all the damage may be done to just one system, and if it takes another hit after the indicator has turned blue, your ship is destroyed.

The rest of the control keys are as follows — 1 to 5 control your warp speed, and you can tell when you go faster because the stars rush by, and the engines, which make a constant hissing sound, go to a higher pitch. To jump to a different sector, you press 'L' until the flashing indicator on the long range scanner is over the sector you require, and then press 'J'. You then make your jump, accompanied by some impressive sound and visual effects. To carry out repairs, you have to jump to a sector with a planet and knock out any aliens. Then pressing 'P' causes a landing, also accompanied by very ingenious graphics. All your systems are then restored to 'green' status; however, this does result in the unfortunate planet's destruction. Perhaps they would have been better off under the Squarm! 'H' suspends the game and 'S' restarts it, and 'Shift Space' aborts the current run.

The game progresses by knocking out as many aliens as possible, finding the Time-Gates, stepping back through time to year zero, then finding the Squarm home planet and firing your Meson Ram to destroy it. The game can be played on 5 levels, and at the higher levels the time steps get smaller, and as each earlier galaxy has more and more aliens, the game gets progressively harder.

IS THAT ALL!!

The biggest fault with Time-Gate is undoubtedly the scoring system. Several times I battled my way through hordes of aliens, eventually to destroy the Squarm home base, to find I had scored between 10 and 40 points! I queried this with Quicksilva, and they said that the score is based more on your skill factor, ie how quickly and efficiently you knock out the aliens, rather than how many. I was told that the best tactics were to stay at warp 1 (the slowest) while in a sector chasing and fighting aliens, only using warp 5 for the jump to the next sector, and putting off repairs for as long as possible.

The program comes in two 34K parts. The first gives you the scenario and rules, and goes through the cockpit display and function keys. The program has provision for the use of a Kempston joystick, and has information about how to link in other makes. The second lot of 34K is the program proper. The documentation is rather lacking — you have to note down the control keys yourself, no information is given about scoring, and nowhere is it mentioned that you can LOAD the second part (the game proper) without going through the instructions. Still, graphics are what arcade games are all about, and Time-Gate certainly has great graphics. At £6.95 (48K ZX Spectrum only), another winner for Quicksilva.

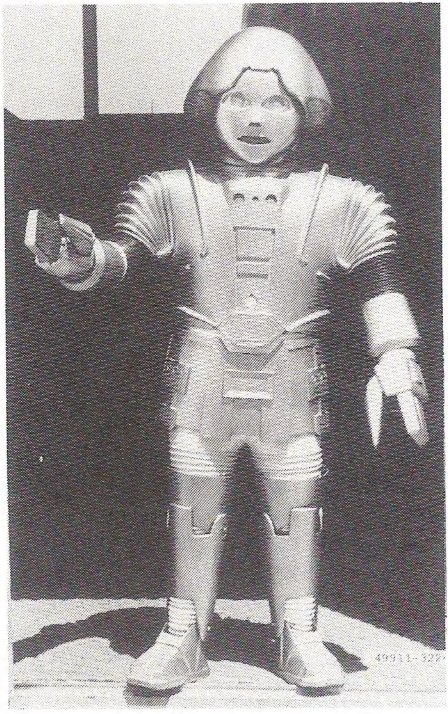
P.G.

Graphics	90%
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

TOBOR

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£7.95
Elfin Software,
Hudson House,
Battery Road,
Great Yarmouth NR30 3NN.

You are in a maze protected by robots. The aim is to destroy these either by shooting them or causing them to collide and hence destroy themselves. They continuously change colour and depending on this, your score is calculated. If a robot goes green then it is indestructable until it changes again, so it is a good idea to keep out of its way. When one lot of robots have been destroyed then a new maze and robots are created. If you are killed, a small tombstone is built, and another of your three lives is lost. Tobor can also be used as a two player game, in which the players take it in turn to try their skill against the robots.



Photograph courtesy Universal City Studios.

Though the principal is pretty straightforward, the graphics are good and the way in which the game has been put together is good and very professional indeed. It is definitely a program that I would recommend.

As far as I know, Elfin Software have not been in existence for long, though they have a good range of ZX Spectrum programs, including: 3D Starwars, Checkman, 3D Game Hunt, Pilot and Pack Man. I very much look forward to receiving these titles as, if they come up to the high standard of Tobor, then they too should be very good value for money. My only grievance would be that the instructions were rather limited.

J.W.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	65%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

TOMB OF DRACULA

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£3.95
Moviedrome Video,
19 Leighton Avenue,
Pinner HA5 3BW.

My first complaint about this tape was that I found it difficult to load. I've had few problems in this department before, but as the program is recorded on both sides of the tape I did manage to get the program operating eventually.

The idea of the game is to find a secret treasure at the bottom of a staircase. A map is given at the beginning (the only time you are shown the map) and you find yourself in a tomb surrounded by vaults which contain pits of primeval slime, ghouls and zombies. Thirty moves are allowed before Dracula himself comes on the scene.

You accumulate, if you're lucky, silver stakes which can help you ward off the attacks of the ghouls, zombies and even Dracula! Staircases can lead to either treasure or yet another level *ad infinitum* — if you stay alive that long. Unlike other adventures, there is no choice in encounters with nasties — if you haven't enough silver stakes to defeat them, too bad.

The graphics vary from good to bad. Whilst understanding the need for an overall impression of the 300 vaults available, it would have been more enjoyable to have had greater detail on those immediately surrounding the player. However, the graphics are used well to give an impression of movement and good fightscenes with the various creatures you come across.

The game comes with a fairly detailed sheet of instructions, and it does have a certain element of suspense, eg entering a new level and no map! Help — where are the zombies?

The cassette is keenly priced at £3.95, delivery within 18 days. Finally, I must admit to finding the treasure very quickly — just luck or have they made it too easy?

M.S.

Graphics	55%
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	62%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality	★ ★

TORNADO

VIC-20 (+ 3K)
£5.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
Palmerston Road,
Southampton SO11 1LL.

Tornado is a game rather similar to Scramble, but rather than moving down a cave system, you fly a rocket ship over a planet surface. Scattered on the surface are three types of base which yield different points if you bomb them. After a period of time, you encounter swarms of flying ships. You must either dodge or shoot these ships since crashing into one destroys your rocket (you have three lives). Destroying these ships also earns points. I was disappointed to see that the enemy ships did not fire back.

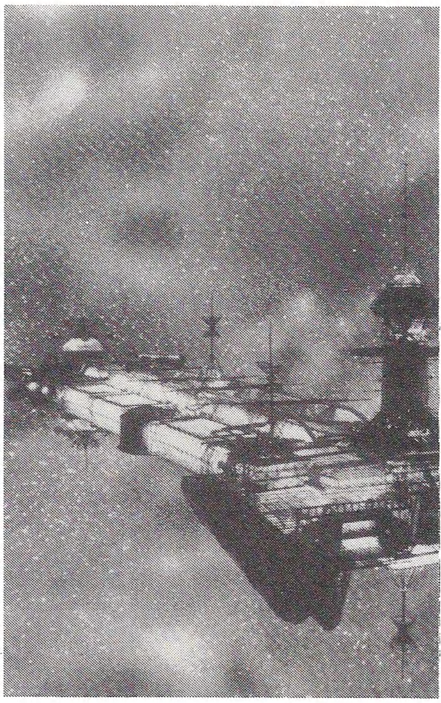
A joystick was necessary to control the rocket which, I thought, was rather hard on users who have no joystick. The rocket can be moved in the usual up, down, left, right directions. The fire button simultaneously releases a bomb and fires one or two missiles forwards. This enables you to both bomb the surface and hit the enemy ships.

The game has the usual features of 1 or 2 players, individual score, and high score. The use of sound and graphics is good and the ship's motion is smooth.

On the whole Tornado is a reasonably challenging game with a gently increasing degree of difficulty. A little more aggression from the enemy would have been nice (eg firing enemy ships, ground to air missiles etc) to give that extra degree of difficulty.

A.W.

Graphics	85%
Ease of Use	79%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	78%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★ ★



Photograph courtesy Walt Disney Productions.

TRADER TRILOGY

VIC-20 (+ 16K)
£14.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
Palmerston Road,
Southampton SO11 1LL.

This is a trilogy of programs requiring 16K of expansion and, as such, must be one of the biggest program packages available for the VIC-20.

You play the part of an interplanetary trader endeavouring to make an honest credit by buying and selling commodities. Initially you have 1000 credits to spend at your home base before travelling to other planets of the system. The current market price for each commodity is variable offering a nice variation in the game each time.

Each planet has a different problem to solve, whether it be telepathic blobs which ask you questions or drug addicted Deltans. On occasion you are required to perform some real time ship manoeuvres using the cursor keys, which can be testing.

You are given a number of opportunities to sell your cargo and acquire other goods, usually by bartering to get the best price. The climax is a rather unfriendly maze which conceals various surprises and frequently results in your death.

Overall the plot was reasonable with sufficient variation to maintain interest and offer alternative conclusions. The use of graphics and animation were outstanding, but the sequences were rather slow and occasionally unnecessary. Waiting for each section to load was a nuisance and my enjoyment of the game was reduced as a result.

I was impressed with the instructions which were supplied in a neat little booklet. This package represents good value for money and will appeal to the younger generation. Perhaps the use of graphics could have been reduced to yield a smaller program with a little more complexity.

A.W.

Graphics	88%
Ease of Use	65%
Instructions	75%
Play it Again	68%
Value for Money	69%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★

TRIAD

VIC-20 (5K)
£7.95
Sumlock,
Royal London House,
198 Deansgate,
Manchester M3 3NE.

The first time I saw an arcade game with aliens swooping down from the 'space invader' pack I was spellbound. That was quite some time ago now, and any game relying solely on that theme these days has to be extra special. This has the usual theme, but lacks any memorable features. I found it rather boring.

That isn't to say that it's easy to beat. But the reward for wiping out one screen of aliens is just the same again, only quicker.

I can't particularly praise the graphics, and the only added feature is the self-play routine after 10 seconds or so if you don't start a new game yourself.

B.J.

Graphics	65%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	55%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

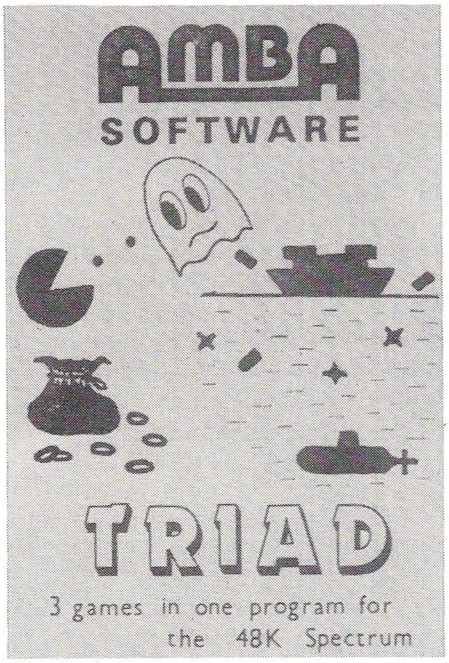
TRIAD

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£9.80
Amba Software,
Freepost,
Cambridge CB1 78R.

Triad is a collection of three games — a variant of Pacman, a game called Sub Attack and a maze game called Treasure Hunt — in one machine code program.

The first of these is a reasonable copy of the original arcade game. It offers 14 different mazes and nine different speeds of play, the last being the only one fast enough to make the game worthwhile. The ghosts come straight at you with none of the dawdling often associated with spirits of this sort.

Sub Attack is a fairly mindless game in which you drop depth charges on to submarines, which are firing back at you. Even in the highest level of play it requires little skill.


AMBA
SOFTWARE
TRIAD
3 games in one program for the 48K Spectrum

Treasure Hunt, on the other hand, is a fairly original game of the maze variety, in which you go round collecting treasure instead of chasing ghosts. There are many levels of play involving combinations of different attributes, such as moving walls and limits on the length of time for which each object appears.

Not a bad little package, though a shade overpriced. Reasonable graphics and sound, and adequate documentation.

I.O.

Graphics	60%
Ease of Use	50%
Instructions	75%
Play it Again	55%
Value for Money	50%
Star Quality ★ ★	

3D TUNNEL

ZX Spectrum (48K or smaller)
£5.95
New Generation Software,
Freepost,
Oldland Common,
Bristol BS15 6BR.

This game is like no tube journey you've ever been on! Imagine yourself as the driver of a wayward London tube train careering along an unknown tunnel and you'll be some way towards playing this game. Once you've loaded the game, you are presented with a menu of options, including a choice of two well-known makes of joystick (Kempston and AGF Hardware), 'spare', which is a general joystick arrangement, as well as the option to use the keyboard controls. To start the game, you have to choose between a fast, medium or slow speed; and if you're after a relaxed time at the keyboard, I'd recommend the slow speed!

The idea of the game is to travel down a tunnel and kill the various wildlife that you find there. Amongst these creatures are spiders, toads, bats, rats and the occasional tube train. Various points are allocated to these creatures, and if you successfully manage to get them in your sights, your score is incremented by this amount. Dodging a tube train is given the highest number of points; and rightfully so in my opinion — I never managed to dodge it once!

It is hard to offer advice concerning tactics for the game since the creatures appear on different levels of the tunnel, ie spiders hang from the ceiling and rats crawl along the floor. However, I must say that the game improved 100% once played with a joystick; the keyboard controls are a little difficult to manipulate easily.

The graphics used to describe the various furry (or not so furry) animals are also very good, as is the representation of a tube train. The only thing that bothered me slightly was the use of the colour in the tunnel. It wasn't the impression of the tunnel that made me feel slightly 'heady', but the moving colours on the eyes — not a game for tired eyes.

The complete game can be played on the 48K ZX Spectrum — but for those of you with the smaller ZX Spectrum, you can play each phase of the game separately. You can travel down the tunnel, zap the various creatures (only one per phase), but in the 16K version there is no tube train. However, when you consider the memory restrictions of the 16K ZX Spectrum, New Generation have done very well to make the program available to all ZX Spectrum users.

When I spoke to the author of the program, he told me that when you have journeyed down the tunnel, killed any number of creatures and dodged the odd tube train, you eventually emerge in the cold light of day, and are greeted with a message of congratulations. I'm only telling you this because all I ever got was a message emphasising my failure, and a quick note that I needed more practise!

R.M.

Graphics	75%
Ease of Use	55%
Instructions	55%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

U

U.F.O.

Sharp MZ-80K
£8.00
Knights Computers,
108 Rosemount Place,
Aberdeen.

Just about the most difficult computer game we've come across! This is so fast – it's maddening. The supplier, Knights, realise the difficulty by refuse to slow down the thing on the grounds that it's more fun this way!

UFO is *not* a 'Space Invaders' by some other name. A matrix of corridors is produced on the screen at the top of which 10 UFOs appear, one by one – accompanied by worrying sound effects.

You control a little man, stuck at the bottom right. Once all 10 baddies are present, they come after you – very, very fast. Your own defence is to missile them out before they get to you. Missiles can only be fired in the direction you're moving and you HAVE to keep moving.

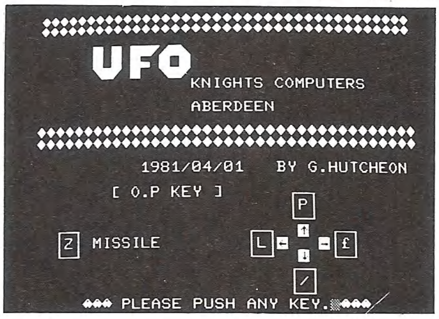
It's fast; it's well-night impossible to beat; it's never boring – there isn't *time* to get bored – and it's compulsive. UFO is written in machine code for speed and is loaded from the monitor, rather than BASIC.

The program is so simple to use and so hard to beat it'll probably become a classic of its kind.

I hate it!

R.H.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	70%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	



UFO KNIGHTS COMPUTERS ABERDEEN

1981/04/01 BY G.HUTCHEON

[O.P KEY]

Z MISSILE

PLEASE PUSH ANY KEY.

ULTIMATE ADVENTURE

Dragon 32
£8.00
Microdeal,
41 Truro Road,
St. Austell,
Cornwall.

This adventure takes a couple of minutes to unload from cassette and is written entirely in BASIC. The instructions, spanning several screens, should be adequate for all new adventures. They also described how to save an uncompleted game on cassette for resumption later on.

The aim of the game is to venture out from a market place, equipped with 250 dollars and 250 'strength' points, and search for seven hidden treasures. Finding a treasure adds to your capital; you must accumulate 1,000 dollars and return to the market in one piece to complete the adventure successfully. There are items which you can use to aid you in your task but you have to buy them in the market.

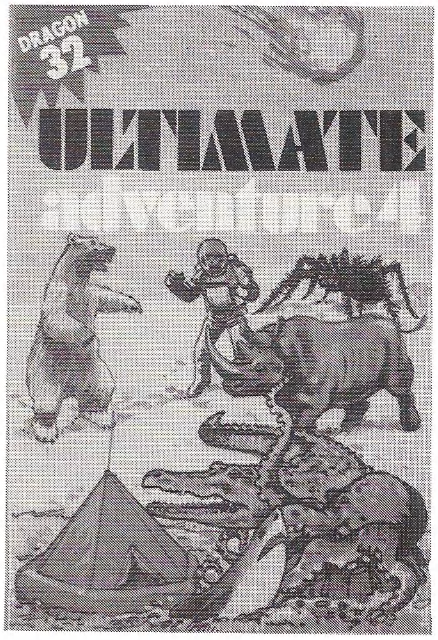
Once you venture outside the market place your travels may take you from the desert to the Arctic, and you can get teleported to any location if you fall foul of one of the numerous portholes.

Pythons, rhinos, sharks and other dangerous animals imperil your journey. Fending them off will cost you some strength points, but you can regain your strength if you find the infirmary.

Although the game does make some use of sound and hi-res graphics when looking for treasure, I felt that it lacked excitement and could have done with a touch of humour. Adventure game addicts may find enough to keep them occupied, but for me this was not the ultimate adventure.

C.D.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	



V

VENTURE

TRS—80 I & III
£11.95
Microdeal,
41 Truro Road,
St. Austell,
Cornwall.

My main criticism with this, otherwise most enjoyable arcade style game, is its very poor documentation. The loading instructions are on a very small piece of paper that contains only the essential information needed for loading this machine language cassette. The playing instructions are contained in one, very limited, screen display and, though adequate, are likely to cause confusion.

The object of the game is to journey around a maze with very narrow paths and try to obtain the treasures located in a number of rooms. A type of graphic adventure. As the instructions state, you move the graphic representation of yourself, by pressing the arrow keys, but, if you follow the instructions and attempt to fire an arrow by pressing the space bar, this will not work unless you are within one of the rooms.

Your wanderings are made very hazardous by the fact that you are constantly pursued by deadly enemies. Dodging these creatures is the most difficult part of the game as you are unable to kill them in the maze of corridors, and there are few places to avoid them. (If this sounds complicated, the game is best described as being similar to Scarfman with Robot Attack joining in when you enter a room).

Points are awarded for killing the nasties, and obtaining treasure and you are given three lives in order to achieve a high score. If your score is one of the 10 best of the session, you are allowed to enter your name on the Top Ten scores that are displayed at the beginning of the game.

The game is in 'real time' and very addictive, even more so with sound facilities connected to the cassette output port.

D.B.

Graphics	81%
Ease of Use	71%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	65%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

VENTURE

ZX Spectrum (16K or 48K)
£6.00
G & J Bobker,
29 Chadderton Drive,
Unsworth,
Bury,
Lancashire.

Although the full game is written for 48K, one side of the cassette has been recorded for the 16K machine, with a second loading to play the last three games.

Both sides of the tape loaded first time with no trouble. All the instructions are on the screen, and I found them very easy to follow.

You are given £1,000 and the opportunity to increase the amount by playing a total of seven games. In the first, you bet on which of three ducks will finish a race first.

Game number two is a fruit machine type where you are given 10 pulls of the handle . . .this is where you can win a bob or two.

The third is a simple treasure hunt using a grid with hints given on which direction to take. In game four, Mastercode, you have to guess a four-digit code set by the computer. Fifthly, you have to keep a car on a winding road, and the amount of time on the track represents a percentage of £1000 added to your hopefully increasing total. Game number six gives you a chance to bomb a ZX81 keyboard, and wipe it off the screen . . .it can be done

Last but not least is an adventure game set in a maze where you can gather gold. First you must fight off some fearsome monsters with such diverse 'weapons' as cheese, fish, and would you believe, an oil can. This is the game where your fate is decided.

A compendium of simple games strung together to make a game which I am sure will appeal to a wide age group. But for £6, a little overpriced.

B.B.

Graphics	50%
Ease of Use	85%
Instructions	90%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	40%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

VIC GAMMON

VIC-20 (+ 3K)
£7.00
Bug-Byte,
98-100 The Albany,
Old Hall Street,
Liverpool L3 9EP.

A computer version of backgammon and very like the real thing. A clear and concise double-sided instruction leaflet is better than the poor guidance provided with some other games.

You play against the computer — you use the black

Photograph courtesy Rex Features Ltd.

counters and the VIC-20 plays with the white ones — and the player with the highest dice score starts.

The winner is the one who bears off all the counters first. So if you end while the computer has a counter on your side of the board you score three points.

If, as most people do, you play a series, award one point per match. Compulsive to play, VIC Gammon will keep you engrossed for a long time, even if you've never played the board game.

P.R.

Graphics	68%
Ease of Use	72%
Instructions	75%
Play it Again	75%
Value for Money	80%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★

VIC PANIC

VIC-20 (unexpanded)
£7.00
Bug-Byte
98-100 The Albany,
Old Hall Street,
Liverpool L3 9EP.

As one of the crew of an intergalactic mineral freighter, you have to carry out maintenance work on the superstructure using a network of ladders.

But during your work you make an unwelcome discovery . . . you are not alone. The ship is being taken over by aliens who will kill everyone unless someone stops them. And that someone is you.

Your only weapon is your space shovel. And the only way to destroy the aliens is to dig holes in the ship so they fall through, then fill in the holes. You just hope the falls are fatal. Just when you think you've wiped them out still more aliens appear. Whatever you do, don't panic . . .

You start with 2,000 units of oxygen which is supplemented with every alien you destroy.

Scoring varies according to the colour of the aliens and the difficulty in destroying them. Cyan aliens score 100, red 200 and white 300. Red aliens have to fall through two levels and white ones only perish when they have plunged through three levels.

Choice of keyboard or joystick operation. Use a joystick if you have one.

P.R.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	75%
Play it Again	70%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★

VOICE CHESS

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£9.95
Artic Computing,
396 James Reckitt Avenue,
Hull,
North Humberside.

Voice Chess is based on Artic's successful ZX81 Chess II program, but with the added novelty of speech. Whenever a move is made, Voice Chess speaks its co-ordinates, if rather indistinctly, and moves the appropriate piece. It will also suggest a move if you ask for help.

There are six levels of play, but the blurb on the cassette inlay advises that the last two are really only suitable for correspondence chess — for which the voice is irrelevant. At level 0, the response time is fast but the computer plays a very weak game. Level 2 is probably the most satisfactory level to play at, with a response time of about 40 seconds.

After loading, and at any time during the game, the 'Analyse' option may be entered. Once in this mode you can move pieces around, swap sides or change the level of play as required. Using this facility occasionally seems to make the computer lose track of the game At one point, after being checked, I was able to change sides and capture its king — upon which the computer made a move and promptly crashed.

The speech takes a while to get used to, and amplification is essential. However after a while, as you recognise separate words, the 'voice' becomes more intelligible. To break the monotonous repetition of piece positions, the computer occasionally comes up with some wisecrack such as "I was expecting that" or what sounds like "Oh golly, not again!"

Playing chess with a well-designed board and finely-made pieces is an aesthetic as well as an intellectual experience, and computer chess should seek to make the screen display attractive as well as clear. Artic has achieved this to a certain extent. The pieces are well designed, being large and clear, and the screen display has been kept simple and uncluttered. But the screen colours can be tiring after a while.

A good, well documented chess program, but the speech is just a gimmick.

I.O.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	65%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality	★ ★ ★ ★

VOYAGER 1

TRS 80 I, II, TRS 80 Colour,
Apple II, Atari (32K), PET (32K)
£18.95
Avalon Hill,
650 High Street,
North Finchley,
London N12

Voyager 1 is one of the better 'seek and destroy' type of games. You are the only human aboard an alien spaceship that is infested by killer robots.

As you may have guessed, your mission is to either, destroy all the robots or, destroy all of the ship's generators and escape yourself.

As you roam around the ship's 144 locations, you are given a 3-dimensional, 'eye level' view of your locations. Using single keyboard entries, you move around the ship, you may take a laser gun if you happen upon one, turn left or right and move forward or backwards. Occasionally you will come across an elevator which will take you to a new level within the ship, should you require it. Scattered about the ship are generators which you may destroy or use to re-charge your laser gun. There is also an escape shuttle craft which you must locate before you dare destroy the final generator. During your wanderings you use up your energy, and this is shown on a chart, to the right of your display, together with the charge state of your laser gun and the ship's generators. Should you chance upon one of the killer robots, you must hope that you are not too exhausted and that your laser gun is charged.

As well as a command to Abandon Ship, there is one other command that you may call upon. This is MAP! Pressing the M key clears the screen and gives you a graphic display of the rooms that you have searched as seen from above. Also shown on the screen are the number of robots remaining and any objects that you have discovered (eg lasers, generators etc).

The program boasts a sound capability, but I could not make this facility work with my TRS-80 Model I, but this did not detract from my enjoyment of an excellent game that has many features not normally available on a single game.

D.B.

Graphics	58%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	79%
Play it Again	66%
Value for Money	72%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

W

WACKY WAITERS

VIC-20 (unexpanded)
£5.50
Imagine Software,
Masons Buildings,
Exchange Sreet East,
Liverpool.

Here for once is a game with an entirely original plot. You control a waiter who rushes from side to side of the screen serving customers with wine. The screen is divided into six floors linked by five lifts, and the waiter must be carefully guided on and off the lifts (errors are terminal).

Stumbling while carrying the wine results in a warning and three warnings result in the sack. The use of graphics was fair and animation good. The use of sound, however, was negligible.

Personally I found the game rather unsatisfying. Having a good plot and designed some good graphics, the programmer seems to have run out of steam.

I prefer good accurate instructions, but this game came supplied with a piece of rather tedious prose which bored rather than informed.

A.W.

Graphics	80%
Ease of Use	60%
Instructions	55%
Play it Again	45%
Value for Money	55%
Star Quality ★ ★	

WARGAME

TI-99/4A
£6.00
TX Software,
109 Abbotsweld,
Harlow,
Middlesex CM18 6TQ.

Wargame, as its name suggests, tests your skill as a strategist and marksman against that of the computer or another player.

The display shows you a randomly produced map, depicting hills, forests, swamp and water together with flat terrain on which each player has three home bases. You are in command of a number of tanks and guns, and have the task of attacking and destroying your opponents' bases as well as defending your own.

Tanks and artillery are moved across the varying landscape using either a combination of keys or joysticks, and an advantage can be gained or a disadvantage incurred, depending on where you place your pieces.

When you are within range of an enemy base, entering fire mode displays a range and direction finder on the screen to help you get the target in your sights. This proves quite tricky to use and practice is needed in order to become a competent marksman.

Graphic display and colour are used efficiently, enabling you to easily identify your, and your opponents' pieces and the nature of the terrain you intend to move into. Some sound is used for shell explosions and the running down of tank engines when they are hit.

The program runs smoothly without any apparent bugs in loading or playing. Instructions are not displayed on screen, but a fairly adequate set of printed instructions are included in the package. A set of options enable you to vary the speed of your tanks or the firing range of your guns, and these along with three skill levels, add to the variety of the game.

The game lasts a reasonable amount of time, and makes a refreshing change from being blown out of hyperspace in 10 seconds flat. It is quite slow moving, but then the emphasis is on strategy, and there is plenty to think about during the game.

At the price, a worthwhile acquisition for anyone who enjoys these boardgame-type of programs.

D.B.

Photograph courtesy MGM

Graphics	72%
Ease of Use	70%
Instructions	50%
Play it Again	81%
Value for Money	85%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

WINGED AVENGER

ZX Spectrum (16K)
£6.95
Workforce,
140 Wilsden Avenue,
Luton,
Bedfordshire LU1 5HR.

A ZX Spectrum version of the 'Galaxians' type arcade money machine, in which wave after wave of 'baddies' come screaming down the screen determined to kill of your lone, heroic defender. The more you kill, the more you have to kill next time round.

Avenger has three 'phases' in which the types of attacker changes with each stage. Once all three are completed, you go back, to the start and do it again . . . and again . . . and again . . . and . . . until you run out of fuel and are therefore unable to defend yourself any longer.

Phase One attackers are little circles, Phase Two produces some pretty bird-type 'nasties' and Phase Three is a static mother ship which has to be destroyed to recharge your fuel level and to continue the game.

You can choose the speed of action and control your base lasers and shield using the keyboard. From the look of the tiny graphics characters, this could be a ZX81 program converted up using the ZX Spectrum's user definable graphic capability. The birds in Phase Two are well done, but look very silly flapping around like crippled budgies with one wing shot off! (It takes three hits to kill them).

R.H.

Graphics	70%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	70%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

THE WIZARD

BBC Micro (32K)
£6.95
Quicksilva,
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton SO1 1LL.

An interesting mutation of several arcade games, with an original theme. You take the role of Chzraal the wizard, whose task is to save five maidens from the attentions of a host of demon-like birds.

Chzraal stands on the edge of a small cliff, stage left, with the five ladies in a row in front of him, each perched on a rock. The birds descend from the top of the screen and attempt to carry them off.

THE WIZARD
BBC GAMES FROM
QUICKSILVA
RUNS ON BBC MODEL B (32K)

To stop them, the wizard must fire at them with his magic wand, which you can move up and down by using keys A and Z. As he kills off each attacking wave, the difficulty level increases.

Colour, hi-res graphics and sound are used to the full, and what animation there is is superb.

The cassette insert sets the scene in time-honoured Quicksilva tradition, and playing instructions are supplied on screen. Despite my efforts, I found no bugs or accidental ways of crashing the program.

The Wizard's strong graphics and simple concept give it instant addictive quality, and a hall of fame feature for the top three scores adds to the competitive element. But perhaps it is a little too simple to have lasting appeal — especially for arcade-hardened addicts.

R.E.

Graphics	92%
Ease of Use	65%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	50%
Value for Money	61%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

THE WIZARD AND THE PRINCESS

VIC-20 (unexpanded)
£5.95
Melbourne House,
Glebe Cottage,
Glebe House,
Station Road,
Cheddington,
Bedfordshire LU7 7NA.

". . .This program will show you the extent of the possibilities for the VIC-20, both in terms of graphics and in terms of going beyond the memory limitations of the standard machine . . ." Thus begin the notes accompanying this five-part "adventure". Fortunately the program itself is better written.

In chapter one you wander slowly through some pretty countryside, looking for the wizard's castle. It is rather hard not to find it, and success is rewarded with a "Press shift run-stop" message; on doing so you are propelled into chapter two. Here you are expected to stab a particularly handsome dragon in the throat, and unpleasantly easy it is too.

Chapter three is something else again; a three dimensional maze of great complexity and size. The program note suggests that you draw a map as the labyrinth is explored, and a good idea this is. The maze is very difficult to solve even so, but enjoyable all the while.

Chapter four lapses into mediocrity with a hunt for a blob (or "monster", as the program has it) in various rooms of the wizard's castle, and the program goes out on a low note with a very uninspired "poke the troll in the midriff" game.

Good use of program defined graphics is not enough! Only the 20 by 20 maze redeems this adventure, but redeem it it does. Melbourne House is clearly aware of the great marketing potential of adventure games at present, but competition is stiff and standards high. Higher than this.

T.D.

Graphics	56%
Ease of Use	62%
Instructions	80%
Play it Again	58%
Value for Money	46%
Star Quality ★ ★	

WORDFIT

ZX81 (16K)
£5.00
RAM Writer,
3 Vumbra House,
2 Cedar Gardens,
Sutton SM2 5DB.

I found this program a bit of a mystery — is it a game, or is it a utility? The manufacturer sees it as a game, but it could I suppose be used as an aid to crossword compilation too.

All it really does is generate a random crossword-style cell pattern, which you must then fill with any words you choose. But you cannot use the same word twice, and only letters will be accepted.

You can choose between four different sizes of grid, the larger ones obviously presenting more of a challenge, and to make things more difficult still the program will if required fill in random vowels too.

Once the grid is full, though, the program does not stop. The cursor goes moving on, and you can alter the words you have already inserted indefinitely until you have had enough.

On screen you are shown how many words of a given length are still needed to fill the grid, and how many you have already inserted. But there is no score, as you might expect from a Scrabble-type game; if this is to be marketed as a game, then a score facility might be a good idea.

On the whole, I don't think Wordfit makes the most of the ZX81's capabilities. It might appeal if you are a great crossword fan, or want to compile your own crosswords, but most of what it does could be done just as well with a good old low-technology pencil and paper.

C.C-R.

Graphics	20%
Ease of Use	80%
Instructions	60%
Play it Again	40%
Value for Money	20%
Star Quality ★ ★	

XENO II

VIC-20 (+16K)
£6.00
Anirog,
26 Balcombe Gardens,
Horley,
Surrey.

Not so much a new game, as one built up of four separate phases, each with a different and familiar scenario.

Phase one involves landing a space ship through a meteor storm; tricky but not too difficult.

Next you have to destroy three sets of space mines which home in on you.

The third phase is a simple wave of space invaders. During this phase I found the controls a little sluggish and I haven't managed to complete it.

Hence I can't comment on the fourth phase, which apparently involves destroying the "power source".

Overall the graphics were good and the game was challenging, addictive, and most of all frustrating.

I must have been given a rogue tape, though, since I found the game appallingly difficult to load successfully.

A.W.

Graphics	76%
Ease of Use	69%
Instructions	82%
Play it Again	67%
Value for Money	68%
Star Quality ★ ★	

YAHTZI

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£5.50
Work Force,
140 Wilsden Avenue,
Luton,
Bedfordshire.

From two to six players can take part in the game, which is based on the roll of five dice. The screen display is divided into two parts, the upper half showing the faces of the dice from one to six, and the lower half poker dice scores from four of a kind to a high run. Each player has three 'throws', with a hold on each die if required.

At the end of the three throws you must take an option according to what is on the dice faces — so if you have four sixes you can take the sixes option or the four of a kind option, but the option can only be used once. A chance option gives you the value of the five faces of the dice added together. Five of a kind gives you a Yahtzi.

Two points that annoyed me. There is a printed line informing you that you should use keys 1 to 5 for holding, and I would have liked to have seen a longer delay for the print on screen. And at the point when you have completed your three throws, the game positively races on to the next player's go — a longer delay before moving on would be a great improvement.

B.B.

Graphics	85%
Ease of Use	95%
Instructions	10%
Play it Again	80%
Value for Money	95%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★ ★	

Z

ZX COMPLETE FOUR

ZX81 (16K)
£3.95
Paul Gillett,
38 Cromwell Way,
Kidlington,
Oxford.

After all those numbing space battles, ZX Complete Four is something very diffrent — a novel game of strategy to get that grey matter working normally again. Indeed the title is an apt description of the game. You and the computer (or another player) take turns in placing 'pieces' within a frame of seven columns. The winner is the first to complete a row of four pieces in any direction.

The computer doesn't take long to respond to your move, and a game can be completed quite quickly. Unusually, for me, I found I could actually win at this one — against the ZX81 at least. Not much in the way of instructions, which are hardly necessary anyway as you quickly learn the rules whilst you play.

N.P.

Graphics	35%
Ease of Use	75%
Instructions	40%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	58%
Star Quality ★ ★	

ZX GALAXIANS

ZX81 (+3K)
£6.50
Artic Computing,
396 James Reckitt Avenue,
Hull HU8 0JA.

A good version for the ZX81 of the well known arcade game. You have three spacecraft equipped with the now mandatory laser guns! In front of you are the formations of the hostile Galaxians; shoot down one fleet and another will take its place. Meanwhile some of the enemy craft will peel off from their close formation and swoop down upon you dropping bombs as they go.

You have control of your position — left and right movement — and an inexhaustible supply of laser bolts! The number of attack craft aiming for you increases but the overall speed of the game is well balanced. Slow enough for the novice to get the feel of the game, but fast enough for the experienced tactician to travel some way and score a satisfying number of hits before he gets beaten to death!

P.F.

Graphics	78%
Ease of Use	65%
Instructions	58%
Play it Again	60%
Value for Money	75%
Star Quality ★ ★	

ZX TREK

ZX Spectrum (48K)
£5.00
Impact Software,
70 Redford Avenue,
Edinburgh EH13 0BW.

Star Trek, based on the TV programme of the same name, was one of the original computer game classics. This version has all the features of the original, plus several refinements.

A two dimensional graphics display of long and short range scans and a wealth of textual status reports guide you as you voyage the known galaxy, eliminating Klingons and Romulans, using starbases to repair and refuel the Enterprise.

Impact Software
ZX Trek
ZX Spectrum 48K
Real Time Graphics

Written in BASIC, this is a fairly slow game, and keys often need to be held down before they respond. The instructions supplied are comprehensive and lengthy and need careful reading — frequent reference to them is also necessary when playing. But nowhere in the instructions is the number-direction relationship properly explained.

Colour is used well. Sound effects are optional, but using sound slows the game down. Graphics are poor; letters represent the enemy's ships, and the display tends to be confusing.

Since the game takes a long time to complete, a save game feature would have been useful, but there isn't one.

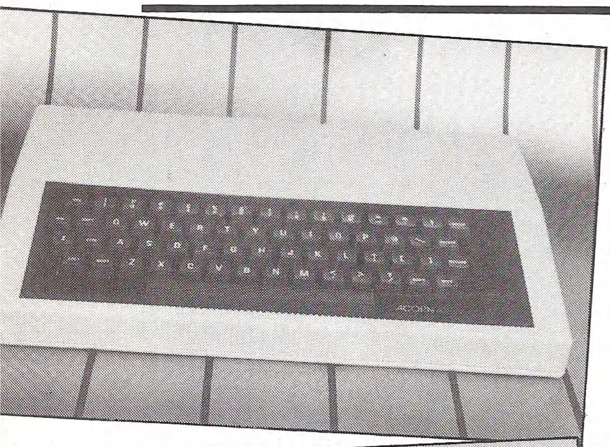
A good version of an old favourite. A year ago it would have been superb; today it has been superseded by machine-coded multigraphical variations such as Time Gate.

R.E.

Graphics	50%
Ease of Use	50%
Instructions	85%
Play it Again	65%
Value for Money	60%
Star Quality ★ ★ ★	

INDEX

Here is an index arranged by machine — see what you could buy to play on your micro.



Acorn ATOM

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Death Satellite	12K	£6.00	A & F Software	★★★
Painter	8K	£6.90	A & F Software	★★★★
Robot Nim	5K	£3.95	A & F Software	★★
Space Panic	6+ 6K	£6.90	A & F Software	★★★★

Apple II

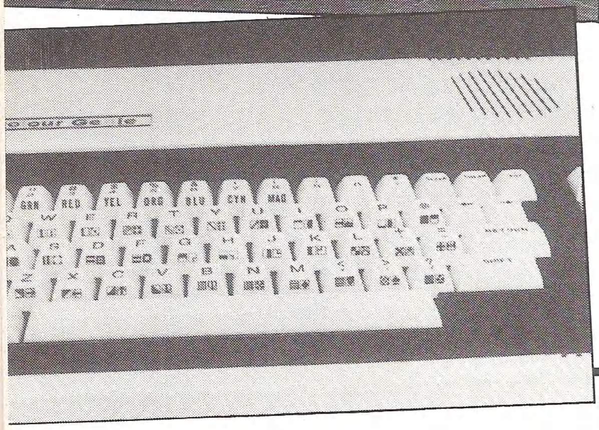
GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Acquire	STD	£12.95	Avalon Hill	★★★
Computer Scrabble	STD	£24.95	Little Genius	★★★
Voyager 1	STD	£18.95	Avalon Hill	★★★

Atari

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Airstrike	16K	£15.95	Gemini Electronics	★★★★★
Caverns of Mars	16K	£29.99	Atari	★★★★
Dog Daze	8K	£14.00	Atari	★★★
Eastern Front	16K	£22.50	Atari	★★★★★
Galactic Chase	16K	£16.00	Softcell Computers	★★★★
Galactic Empire	32K	£16.50	Atari	★★
Ghost Hunter	16K	£19.95 (tape) £22.95 (disc)	Creative Software	★★
Preppie	16K	£17.95	Creative Software	★★★★★
QIX	16K	£29.95	Atari	★★★
Voyager 1	32K	£18.95	Avalon Hill	★★★

BBC Micro

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Atlantis	32K	£7.50	IJK Software	★★★★
Centipede	32K	£8.05	Superior Software	★★★
Chess	16K	£7.95	Program Power	★★★
Cosmos	16K	£5.95	The Software House	★★★
Educational – 1B	32K	£8.55	Golem Ltd	★★★★
Educational – 2B	32K	£8.55	Golem Ltd	★★★
Escape from Orion	32K	£6.95	Hopesoft	★★★
Firien Wood	32K	£7.50	MP Software & Services	★★★
Fruit Machine	32K	£8.05	Superior Software	★
Galaxians	32K	£8.50	Superior Software	★★★
Games of Logic and Cunning	16K	£9.70	Golem Ltd	★★
Games of Strategy	16K	£5.00	BBC Publications	★★
Hangman	32K	£9.14	Micro-Aid	★★
Inkosi	32K	£5.95	Chalksoft	★★★★
Invaders	32K	£7.50	IJK Software	★★★
Monsters	32K	£9.95	Acornsoft	★★★★
Protector	32K + Joystick	£7.95	Quicksilva	★★★★
Spaceguard	32K	£7.50	MP Software & Services	★★★
Starwar	16K	£5.95	The Software House	★★★
Swamp Monsters	32K	£7.50	MP Software & Services	★
The Wizard	32K	£6.95	Quicksilva	★★★



Colour Genie

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
The Exterminator	16K	£7.95	Algray	★
Fortress of Evil	16K	£7.95	Algray	★
Kong	16K	£8.95	Algray	★★★

Commodore PET

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Acquire	STD	£12.95	Avalon Hill	★★★
Cosmic Aliens	8K	£8.00	Supersoft	★★★★
Voyager 1	32K	£18.95	Avalon Hill	★★★

Commodore 64

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Attack of the Mutant Camels	+ Joystick	£8.50	Llamasoft	★★★★
Gridrunner	+ Joystick	£8.50	Llamasfot	★★★
Rox 64	STD	£4.95	Llamasoft	★★★

Dragon 32

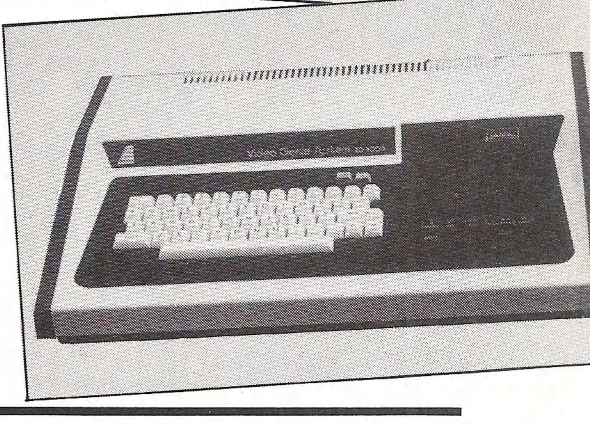
GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Arcade Action	STD	£3.95	Apex Trading	★
CC Poker	STD	£7.95	Compusense	★★★★
Champions	STD	£5.95	Peaksoft	★★★
Championship Darts	STD	£5.95	Shadow Software	★★★★
City Defense	STD	£5.75	Shards Software	★★★★
Donkey King	STD	£8.00	Microdeal	★★★★★
Eduquiz 1	STD	£8.65	Gem Software	★★★
Family Programs	STD	£6.95	Shards Software	★★★
Fun and Games	STD	£6.95	Shards Software	★★★★
Games Pack I	STD	£6.91	Gem Software	★★★
Games Pack II	STD	£6.91	Gem Software	★★★★
Games Pack III	STD	£6.91	Gem Software	★★★
Games Pack IV	STD	£6.91	Gem Software	★★★
Golf	STD	£7.95	Salamander Software	★★★★
Handicap Golf	STD	£6.00	Computer Rentals	★★
Katerpillar Attack	+ Joystick	£7.95	Microdeal	★★★★
Mined Out	STD	£4.95	Quicksilva	★★★★
Monster Mine	STD	£6.91	Gem Software	★★★★
Pimania	STD	£10.00	Automata Ltd	★★★
Planet Invasion	STD	£7.95	Microdeal	★★★★
Space Mission	STD	£6.91	Gem Software	★★★
Space Race	STD	£7.95	Compusense	★★★
Strategic Command	STD	£9.99	Romik Software	★★★★
Ultimate Adventure	STD	£8.00	Microdeal	★★★

Genie I

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Frogger Plus	STD	£4.99	Buttercraft Software	★★★

Jupiter Ace

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Four Challenging Games	STD	£5.50	Remsoft	★★★★



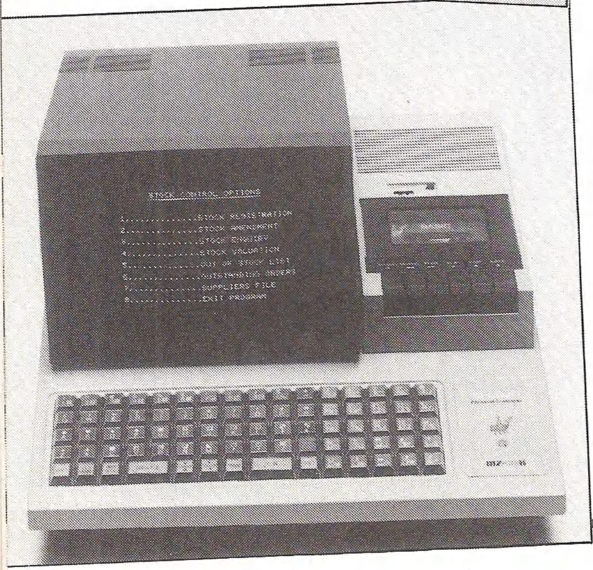
Newbrain

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Miner	STD	£8.50	Computasolve	★★
Star Trader	STD	£8.50	Computasolve	★

Oric-1

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Dungeons of Intrigue	48K	£5.50	ASL Software	★

Jupiter ACE



Sharp MZ-80K

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Monaco Grand Prix	STD	£5.00	Knights Computers	★★★
UFO	STD	£8.00	Knights Computers	★★★

TI-99/ 4A

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Wargame	STD	£6.00	TX Software	★★★★

TRS-80

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Acquire	STD	£12.95	Avalon Hill	★★★
Alien Defense	STD	£11.50	Microdeal	★★★
Defend	STD	£14.95 (tape) £18.40 (disc)	Molimerx	★★
Escape from Pulsar 7	STD	£10.06 (tape) £13.51 (disc)	Molimerx	★★★
Forbidden Planet	STD	£24.95 (disc)	Microdeal	★★★
Jumbo	STD	£17.25 (tape) £19.55 (disc)	Molimerx	★
Venture	STD	£11.95	Microdeal	★★★★
Voyager 1	STD	£18.95	Avalon Hill	★★★

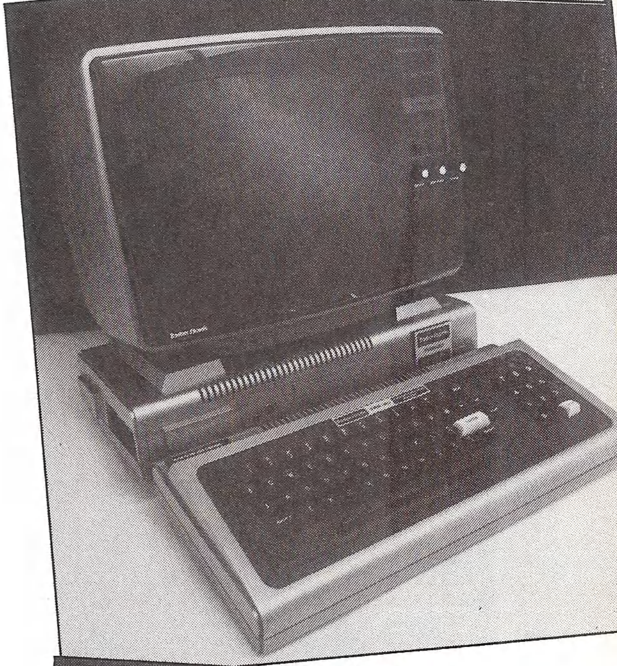
VIC-20

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
The Alien	+ 3K	£9.95	Audiogenic	★★★
Alien Blitz	5K	£7.95	Audiogenic	★★
Flipdisc	+ 8K	£5.95	The Software House	★★★
Frogger	+ 3K	£9.99	Rabbit Software	★★★
Golf	+ 3K	£7.95	Audiogenic	★★★
Gridtrap	STD	£7.95	Sumlock	★★★★
Jelly Monsters	STD Cartridge	£19.95	Commodore	★★★
Jumpin Jack	STD	£7.95	Sumlock	★★★
Kosmic Kamikase	+ 3K	£7.99	Audiogenic	★★
Krazy Kong	+ 16K	£6.00	Anirog	★★★
Laser Zone	+ 8K	£6.00	Llamasoft	★★★
Lunar Rescue	+ 3K	£5.95	Lyversoft	★★★
Martian Raider	STD	£9.99	Romik Software	★★
Mastermind	+ 8K	£9.99, + £1.99 per subject	Commodore	★★★
Mind Twisters	STD	£9.99	Romik Software	★★
Moons of Jupiter	+ 3K	£9.99	Romik Software	★★★
Myriad	+ 3K	£9.99	Rabbit Software	★★★
Nightcrawler	STD	£9.99	Rabbit Software	★★★
Pharoah's Tomb	+ 16K	£6.00	Anirog	★★
Power Blaster	STD	£9.99	Romik Software	★★★
Sea Invasion	STD	£9.99	Romik Software	★★
Siege	STD	£6.99	Postern	★★★
Space Fortress	STD	£9.99	Romik Software	★★★
Space Rescue	5K	£6.95	Sumlock	★★
Starquest/Encounter	16K	£7.95	Quicksilva	★★
Starship Escape	+ 16K	£9.95	Sumlock	★★★
Subspace Striker/Zor	+ 16K	£7.95	Quicksilva	★★★
Tornado	+ 3K	£5.95	Quicksilva	★★★★
The Trader Trilogy	+ 16K	£14.95	Quicksilva	★★★
Triad	5K	£7.95	Sumlock	★★
VIC Gammon	+ 3K	£7.00	Bug-Byte	★★★
VIC Panic	STD	£7.00	Bug-Byte	★★★
Wacky Waiters	STD	£5.50	Imagine Software	★★
The Wizard and the Princess	STD	£5.95	Melbourne House	★★
Zeno II	+ 16K	£6.00	Anirog	★★

ZX Spectrum

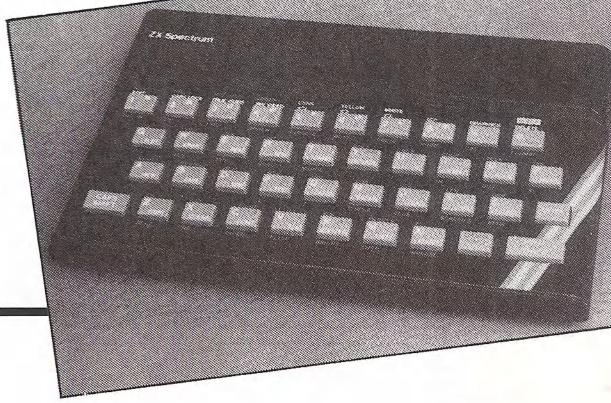
GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Abacus Games Pack 2	16K	£4.95	Abacus	★★★
Adventure 1	16K	£9.95	Abersoft	★★★
Arcadia	16K	£5.50	Imagine Software	★★★★

Astro Blaster	16K	£4.95	Quicksilva	★★★
Backgammon	48K	£5.95	CP Software	★★★★
Cassette 1	16K	£2.95	Silicon Software	★★
Catterpillar	16K	£5.95	CDS Micro Systems	★★★
The Chess Player	48K	£6.95	Quicksilva	★★★★
Cosmic Raiders	16K	£5.95	Mikro-Gen	★★★
Cosmos	16K	£4.95	Abbex Electronics Ltd	★★★
Crazy Balloons	16K	£5.75	A & F Software	★★
Cyber Rats	16K	£5.95	Silversoft	★★
Derby Day	48K	£5.95	Computer Rentals	★★★★
Dictator	48K	£4.95	dk'tronics	★★
Do Not Pass Go	48K	£5.50	Work Force	★★★
Everest Ascent	48K	£6.50	Richard Shepherd Software	★★★
Football Manager	48K	£7.95	Addictive Games	★★★
Frenzy	16K	£4.95	Quicksilva	★★★★
Galaxians	16K	£4.95	Artic Computing	★★★
Gobble a Ghost	16K	£5.95	CDS Micro Systems	★★★
Gobbleman	16K	£4.95	Artic Computing	★★★
Great Britain Limited	48K	£5.95	S W Hessel	★★★
Ground Attack	16K	£5.95	Silversoft	★★★★
Gulp	16K	£3.95	Campbell Systems	★★★
The Hobbit	48K	£14.95	Melbourne House	★★★★★
Horace Goes Skiing	16K	£5.95	Melbourne House	★★★
Invasion Force	16K	£4.95	Artic Computing	★★★
Invisible Man	48K	£5.95	Chalksoft	★★
Jackpot	48K	£4.95	Computer Rentals	★★★
Krakit	16K	£9.95	Artic Computing	★★
Labyrinth	16K	£5.95	Axis Software	★★★
Leapfrog	16K	£5.95	CDS Micro Systems	★★★
Mad Martha	48K	£6.95	Mikro-Gen	★★★
Meteoroids	16K	£4.95	Softek	★★★
Meteor Storm	16K	£4.95	Quicksilva	★★★
Micro Chess	16K	£6.95	Artic Computing	★★★
Mined Out	48K	£4.95	Quicksilva	★★★★
Mines of Saturn/ Return to Earth	16K	£5.95	Mikro-Gen	★★★
Muncher	16K	£5.95	Silversoft	★★★
Orbiter	16K	£5.95	Silversoft	★★★
Othello	16K	£5.95	CDS Micro Systems	★★★
Painter	48K	£5.75	A & F Software	★★★★
Patience	16K	£5.99	Haven Hardware	★★★
Penetrator	48K	£6.95	Melbourne House	★★★
Pimania	48K	£10.00	Automata Limited	★★★
Planetoids	16K	£4.95	Psion	★★★
Print Shop	48K	£5.00	Cases Computer Simulations	★★★
PSE Games Tape 3	16K	£4.95	PSE	★★★
Rescue	48K	£5.95	Computer Rentals	★★★
Schizoids	16K	£5.50	Imagine Software	★★★
Scramble	16K	£5.50	Mikro-Gen	★★★
Simple Arithmetic	48K	£4.95	Camel Micros	★★★
Space Intruders	16K	£4.95	Qucksilva	★★★
Space Raiders	16K	£4.95	Psion	★★★★
Spectrum Golf	16K	£3.95	B S McAlley	★★★
Startrek	16K	£5.50	Fuller Micro Systems	★★★
Superchess	48K	£4.95	CP Software	★★★
Superchess II	48K	£7.95	CP Software	★★★★★
Taipan	16K	£4.95	Jaysoft	★★
Time-Gate	48K	£6.95	Quicksilva	★★★★
Tobor	48K	£7.95	Elfin Software	★★★
Triad	48K	£9.80	Amba Software	★★★
3D Tunnel	48K	£5.95	New Generation Software	★★★★
Venture	16K	£6.00	G & J Bobker	★★★
Voice Chess	48K	£9.95	Artic Computing	★★★★
Winged Avenger	16K	£6.95	Work Force	★★★
Yahtzi	48K	£5.50	Work Force	★★★★
ZX Trek	48K	£5.00	Impact Software	★★★

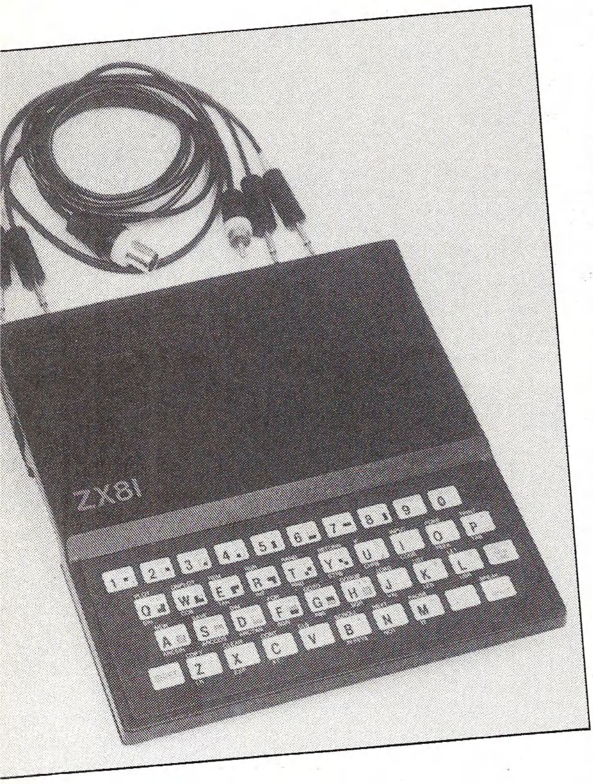


ZX81

GAME	SIZE	PRICE	SUPPLIER	STAR RATING
Adventure 1	16K	£8.95	Abersoft	★★★★
Arcade Action	STD	£4.95	Micromega	★★★
Asteroids	16K	£4.95	Mikro-Gen	★
Awari	16K	£5.95	Understanding Ltd	★★
Bargain Bytes Cassette Two	16K	£5.00	Richard Shepherd Software	★★
Black Crystal	16K	£7.50	Carnell Software	★★★
Black Star	16K	£4.95	Quicksilva	★
Cassette 1	16K	£2.95	Silicon Software	★
Cassette 2	16K	£5.00	Michael Orwin	★★
Cassette 3	16K	£5.00	Michael Orwin	★★
Cassette 4	16K	£5.00	Michael Orwin	★★
Catacombs	16K	£5.95	J.K. Greye Enterprises	★
Centipede	16K	£4.95	dk'tronics	★★★
Challenge	STD	£4.95	Micromega	★



ZX81



Chess	STD	£2.95	Artic Computing	★★
Chess	16K	£6.95	Sinclair Research	★★★
Cosmic Guerilla	16K	£3.95	Quicksilva	★★★
Damper/Glooper	16K	£4.95	Quicksilva	★★★
3D Defender	16K	£4.95	New Generation Software	★★★★
Galaxians	16K	£4.95	Quicksilva	★★★
Galaxians and Gloops	16K	£4.95	Quicksilva	★★
Galaxy Invaders	16K	£3.00	Bridge Software	★★★
1K Games	STD	£6.00	Artic Computing	★
Gamestape 1	STD	£3.95	J K Greye Enterprises	★★★
Gamestape 6	STD	£1.95	New Generation Software	★★★
Krakit	16K	£9.95	Artic Computing	★★
Mazogs	16K	£10.00	Bug-Byte	★★★
3-D Monster Maze	16K	£5.95	New Generation Software	★★★★
Munchees	16K	£3.95	Quicksilva	★★★
Nightmare Park	16K	£4.95	Macronics	★★★
The Nowotnik Puzzle and other diversions	16K	£5.00	Phipps Associates	★★★
Ocean Trader	16K	£3.95	Quicksilva	★★★★
Perilous Swamp/Sorcerers	16K	£4.75	Sinclair Research	★★★
Pioneer Trail	16K	£3.95	Quicksilva	★★
Planet of Death	16K	£5.00	Artic Computing	★★★
QS Defenda	16K	£3.95	Quicksilva	★★★★
QS Invaders	16K	£3.95	Quicksilva	★★★
QS Scramble	16K	£3.95	Quicksilva	★★★
Reversi	16K	£6.95	Mine of Information	★★★★
The Ship of Doom	16K	£7.00	Artic Computing	★★★
Space Intruders	16K	£5.95	Quicksilva	★★★
Space Raiders and Bomber	16K	£3.95	Psion	★★
Subspace Striker and Zor	16K	£3.95	Quicksilva	★★★
Super Glooper and Frogs	16K	£4.95	Psion	★★★
Super Programs (Cassette G3)	STD	£4.95	ICL	★
The Tomb of Dracula	16K	£3.95	Moviedrome Video	★★
Wordfit	16K	£5.00	Ram Writer	★★
ZX Complete Four	16K	£3.95	Paul Gillett	★★
ZX Galaxians	+ 3K	£6.50	Artic Computing	★★

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SPACE ADVENTURE FOR ATARI (32K) & BBC B

PLANETFALL — approximately 25K

There are more ways of conquering a galaxy than blowing it to bits. You can always try and buy it! Even the most magnificent of Empires has to have its traders to feed and service the outlying planets.

Planetfall is a *true* science-fiction game in which you are placed in control of a fleet of starfreighters and the mission is to get rich! While doing so you are developing the outer reaches and civilsation spreads.

Hazards include pirate raids (not *everyone* is civilised!), tight-fisted aliens, navigational errors and a fluctuating market. Multi-player games are even harder with the competition likely to get to a prime planet first — and deflate the value of your cargo! (Up to 12 can play!)

Planetfall needs skill and cunning to succeed and although the game is easy to learn, is not dependent upon chance and so will thus offer a continuing challenge to your abilities. You can save the current situation on tape at any time if it all gets too much, and finish off when you've recovered your nerve!

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OR Debit my Access/ Barclaycard (delete as necessary)

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Mr. Chip
SOFTWARE

VIC 20 GAMES AND UTILITIES

JACKPOT
This is it, the ultimate Fruit Machine for the VIC with nudge, hold and respin 100% machine code. "Overall Jackpot is a beautifully written simulation giving superb graphics, animation and use of colour. In fact, this program makes Commodores Fruit Machine cartridge look unbelievably cheap & nasty." Home Computing Weekly No. 20 19/7/83.

KWAZY KWAKS
Accuracy and speed are required for this Shooting Gallery, superb use of colour & graphics in this new and challenging game from the author of **Jackpot**. 100% machine code, joystick or keyboard control £5.50

BUGSY (Joystick Only)
This is a Minefield with a difference as you step on the stones whilst collecting purple boxes which give you both time and points, they disappear from beneath your feet. DO NOT DESPAIR! "BUGSY" will randomly replace the stones but avoid bumping into him or its sudden death! An original compulsive and challenging game. £5.50

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Here are descriptions of just a few of the games:

HOUSEBREAK You enter a house at night in an attempt to rob it of money and any gold and silver items you can find. Your object is to clean out the house. In the dark you must avoid bumping into the furniture. After an interval of time an alarm will sound and a short while later the lights will be turned on. A vicious dog is then released and you have to use all your skill and cunning to avoid getting bitten as he chases you around the house. Any injuries caused by the dog will slow down your escape. The game is played in real time, has excellent graphics and is very exciting. A new house is generated each time the game is played.

CORRIDORS OF DOOM! A dungeons & dragons type game that is very addictive. You can never win this game by chance. A lot depends on discovering the secrets of just how you have to deal with each individual monster in the game. There is a liquid which will destroy the Werewolf — but which one? How can you tame the giant spider? Will you ever learn the secret of how to defeat the Blood Devil? All of the monsters have treasures for those who are both brave and wise enough to overcome them, but to escape alive you must first cross some very nasty pits. Play it again and again.

AMAZING 3D MAZES Wander through the giant 18x18x18 mazes collecting treasures, you know where they are, but how do you get to them? Extra points are awarded for finding the shortest routes. Don't get too frustrated by apparent dead ends.

3D NOUGHTS & CROSSES Played inside a 4x4x4 cube, this is a game for the intellectual. Great graphics. It plays a mean game and wins about nine out of every ten games it plays.

TOWERS OF HANOI You will welcome this classical puzzle which is a must for anyone with a computer. The problems difficulty depends on how many disks you use. It might only take you a few minutes with four disks, but with all nine it could take all day. Two variations of the game are included. There is a constant display of Hours ; Mins : Secs, so that you know how well or how badly you are doing at any particular stage. If you find you cannot work the problem out! The computer will show you the shortest possible solution.

THE VAULT A high security vault in Oxford. (The game can be changed to centre around your own home town) has ten doors, each with its own five figure combination. The combination of the nine inner doors are known, but only the manager knows the combination of the outer door. Unfortunately the manager has got himself locked in the Vault. It is your job to get him out before all the Oxygen is used up. The computer will give you metaphorical clues to how near you are getting. The time switches which change the combination every so often can prove a problem. This is a case which really puts your powers of logic to the test.

POPULATION SIMULATION This is a game for two players, each becoming the leader of one of the planets 'Techno' & 'Primo'. It is a battle to survive. Each decade a player must decide various things in governing his planet, he must carefully balance production and technology against consumption and population. He can either negotiate with his opponent or declare war on him. How about sending out an exploration party in search of new wealth. Only the experienced last very long.

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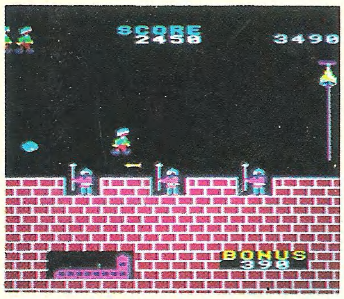
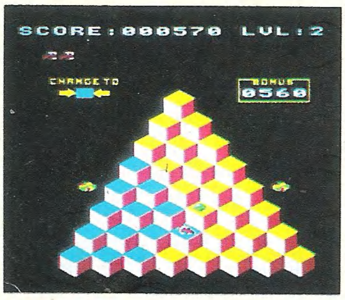


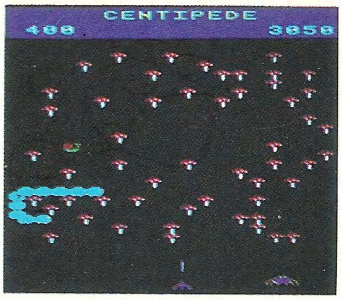
HUNCHBACK (32K) **£7·95**

An excellent version of the arcade game where Quasimodo attempts to rescue Esmeralda. Beautifully detailed animation (the best we've yet seen!) as Quasimodo leaps over the ramparts dodging rocks and arrows, swinging on ropes, avoiding the guards' spears, and ringing the bells. Twelve different screens of action, starting easy and becoming extremely difficult. Choice of starting speed and skill level. A programming masterpiece! (For use with KEYBOARD or JOYSTICKS).
●●● NEW RELEASE ●●●



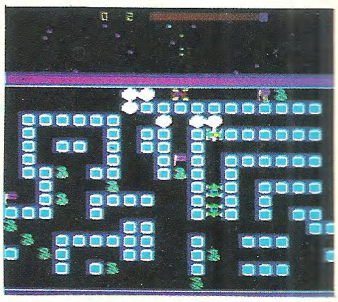
Q*BERT (32K) **£7·95**

A great new arcade game reaches the BBC micro. In this game, you have to move over a pyramid of blocks altering the colour of the blocks as you pass over them. Easy! Except that you have to avoid the balls, which tumble down towards you, and the pyramid's snake, which has a deadly sting. Transportation discs can be used to help you in your increasingly difficult task. Sound effects, hi-score, rankings, skill levels.
●●● NEW RELEASE ●●●



CENTIPEDE (32K) **£7·95**

Incredible arcade type game featuring mushrooms, snails, flies, spiders, and the centipedes of course. Excellent graphics and sound. 6 skill levels, hi-score, rankings, bonuses, and increasing difficulty as the spiders become more lively and the number of mushrooms increases.
(For use with KEYBOARD or JOYSTICKS).
"Visually this game compares well with the arcade version, being colourful and clear."
. . . YOUR COMPUTER



ROAD RUNNER (32K) **£7·95**

The only full feature machine-code version of the arcade game available for the BBC micro. Features include: scrolling screen, radar display, checkpoint flags, fuel gauge, smoke screens, 6 skill levels, rankings, increasing difficulty, and sound effects.
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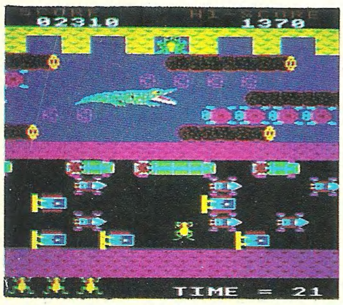
"The game becomes very hard and has very smooth graphics. Excellent."
. . . BEEBUG MAGAZINE



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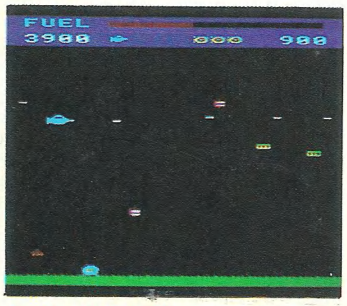
(For use with KEYBOARD or JOYSTICKS).
". . . very good indeed . . . fast flicker-free graphics and a frog that really hops!"
. . . BEEBUG MAGAZINE



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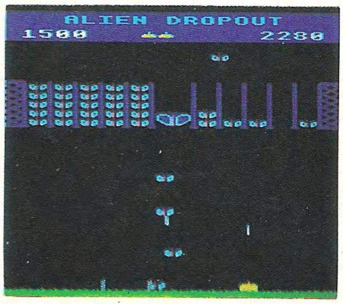
Arcade-style game based upon features from DEFENDER and SCRAMBLE. 5 types of menacing alien fire at you and may attempt to ram you. Separate attack phases, fuel dumps, repeating laser cannon, asteroids, smart bombs, hi-score, rankings, 6 skill levels, sound effects.
"A thoroughly enjoyable program, well worth the money . . ." . . . HOME COMPUTING WEEKLY



ALIEN DROPOUT (32K) **£7·95**

Based upon the arcade game of ZYGON, but our version improves upon the original arcade game itself. You have to shoot the aliens out of their "boxes" before the "boxes" fill up. Once full, the aliens fly down relentlessly, exploding as they hit the ground.
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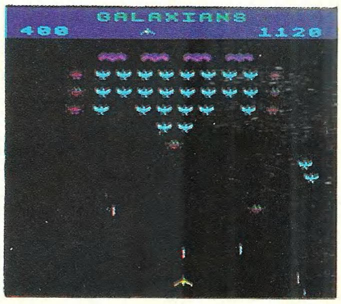
". . . these moths are out to get more than the clothes in your wardrobe" . . . YOUR COMPUTER



GALAXIANS (32K) **£7·95**

Fast action version of the popular arcade game. 4 types of Galaxian (in 3 initial screen formations) swoop down individually or in groups of two or three. 6 skill levels, hi-score, rankings, bonus laser bases and increasing difficulty. Superb sound effects and graphics.
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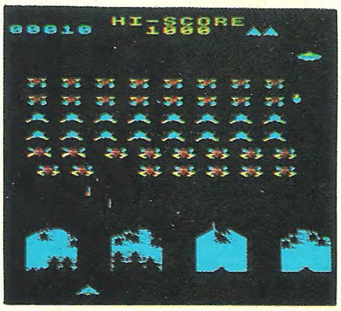

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Superb version of the old classic arcade game, with novel enhancements. 48 marching invaders drop bombs that erode your defences, and two types of spaceship fly over releasing large bombs that penetrate through your defences. Increasing difficulty, hi-score, superb graphics and sound.
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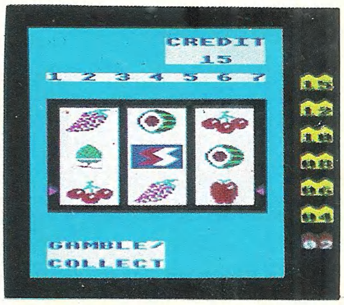

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●●● NEW RELEASE ●●●

CRIBBAGE (32K) **£6·95**

An impressive version of the card game of cribbage. Play against the computer, and see the scores being pegged onto the cribbage board. Very good graphics, and the computer plays extremely well. Full verification at all stages of play.
●●● NEW RELEASE ●●●

PONTOON (32K) **£6·95**

Up to 6 players can play against the computer as banker; or you can play individually against the computer, with alternating banker. Very good graphics, and the game features all standard rules, including "splitting pairs".
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